

# APPENDIX 1

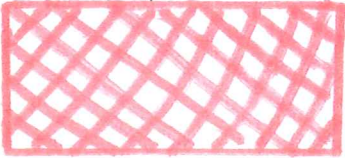
PUBLICATION DRAFT FOR THE MEDWAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
REPRESENTATIONS OF MICHAEL DAKERS LMRTPI

**COPY OF CENTRAL STROOD INSET PLAN FOR MEDWAY LOCAL PLAN  
(ADOPTED VERSION) 2003**

## Key to Central Strood Inset Plan – 2003



- Proposed Ring Road



- Car Parks – A – Friary Place  
B – Temple Street  
C – Commercial Road  
D – Civic Centre Car Park



- Private Car Parks – B&Q Retail Park

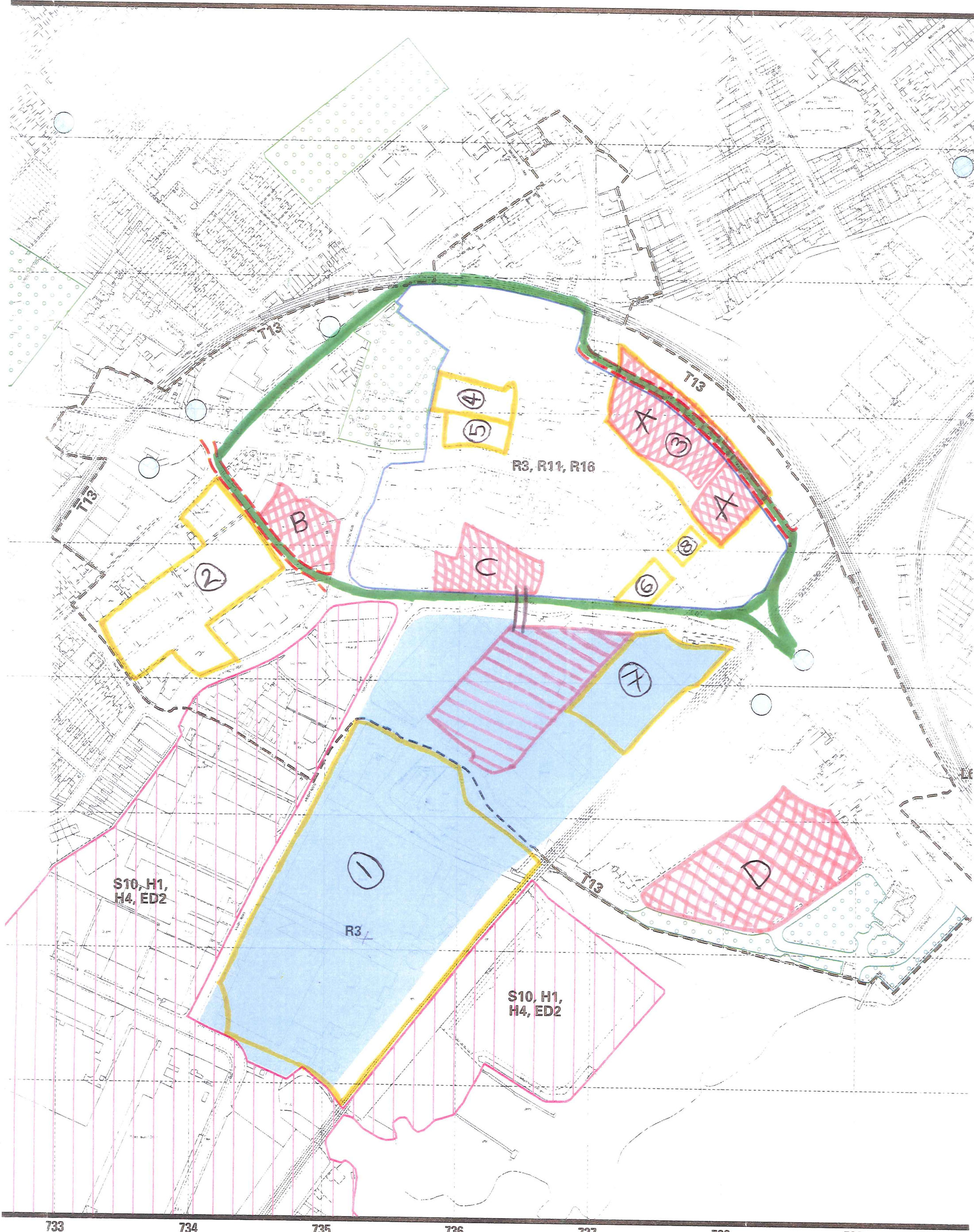


- Large Stores    1 – Morrisons  
                          2 – Tesco  
                          3 – Aldi  
                          4 – Asda  
                          5 – Wilkinsons  
                          6 – Woolworths/Iceland  
                          7 – B&Q  
                          8 – Halfords/Motor World



- Pedestrian Crossing from Retail Park

# CENTRAL STROOD INSET - 2003



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## **APPENDIX 2**

**PUBLICATION DRAFT FOR THE MEDWAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
REPRESENTATIONS OF MICHAEL DAKERS LMRTPI**

**PLAN SECTIONS REGARDING “5. RETAIL” AND “6. TRANSPORTATION” OF  
THE 1992 PLAN**



## 5. RETAIL

### THE ISSUES

#### Recent Trends

- 5.01 In recent years, retail change in the Medway Towns has tended to reflect national trends. Consumer expenditure has increased substantially in the last decade partly as a result of population growth but also because of rising incomes. The proportion of income spent on 'convenience' goods, such as food, has stayed at much the same level (taking inflation into account) but spending on 'comparison' or 'durable' goods has increased significantly. It is likely that expenditure on comparison goods will continue to increase through most of the Plan period but much will depend on national as well as local economic conditions.
- 5.02 With this increased spending power has come greater mobility and there have been major changes in peoples' shopping patterns. Consumer demand for a wider selection of goods, better shopping environments and ease of parking has caused the major food retailers in particular to locate in newly built free-standing stores away from town centre locations where access and parking is much easier.
- 5.03 These trends are readily apparent in the Medway Towns. Large free-standing supermarkets have been designed in areas such as Princes Park, Walderslade, retail parks at Rochester Airport and Gillingham Business Park and a major shopping mall at Hempstead Valley.
- 5.04 A detailed examination of local expenditure trends indicates that spending on convenience goods by the resident population is roughly equal to the estimated turnover achieved on convenience floorspace in the Medway Towns. This suggests that there is little quantitative need for additional convenience floorspace. However, the quality of the existing floorspace does not always meet the high expectations of consumers and some increase in expenditure will result from population growth. The provision of some additional floorspace may therefore be justified during the Plan period.
- 5.05 In the case of spending on comparison goods it would appear that expenditure exceeds the turnover achieved on existing floorspace by approximately 20%. As a result some £20 million is being spent by the resident population outside the Local Plan Area. This indicates that existing retail centres do not offer the full range of products and services required. It is unlikely that this situation will change unless new investment is attracted to town centres and, where necessary, new forms of retailing encouraged to locate within the towns.
- 5.06 In addition to the trends referred to above, there have also been changes in the marketing and provision of professional and financial services. These services, such as estate agencies, building societies and insurance services have become well established within shopping centres. They are often able to compete with the larger retailers for prime sites in the retail core. Whilst this encourages investment it can dilute the primary retail function of town centres by breaking up shopping frontages and forcing independent retailers away from core locations.
- 5.07 The trends described above have also placed additional pressures on local retail centres, shopping parades and traditional corner shops. Local centres which fail to provide sufficient choice, quality and convenience have declined and, in some areas petrol filling stations duplicate the role of the local corner shop.
- 5.08 A short assessment of each of the main centres within the Plan Area together with a summary of the strategy which is to be applied is set out in paragraphs 5.18 to 5.48 below. The floorspace figures quoted are derived from a Kent County Council 1986 Retail Floorspace Survey.

## POLICY CONTEXT

### Central Government Guidance

- 5.09 Guidance from Central Government is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG 6) "Major Retail Development" and Development Control Policy Note (DCPN No.11) "Service Uses in Shopping Areas".

### General Guidance

- 5.10
- (a) It is not the function of the planning system to inhibit competition among retailers or among methods of retailing, or to preserve existing commercial interests.
  - (b) Account should be taken of the benefits to the public which flow from new developments in the distributive and retailing trades.
  - (c) The public needs a wide range of shopping facilities and benefits from competition between them.
  - (d) Commercial competition is not a land use planning consideration. The possible effects of a proposed major retail development on existing retailers is not a relevant factor in determining planning applications and appeals. The impact of a retail development can only be taken into account in exceptional cases where the cumulative effect of a proposal is on a scale and of a kind that can seriously affect the vitality and viability of a nearby town centre.

### Major Out-of-Town Developments

- 5.11 Proposals for such developments (which may have a floorspace of 10,000 - 100,000 sq.m.) have no place in the Green Belt nor are they generally acceptable in the open countryside.

### Large Modern Stores

- 5.12
- (a) Large convenience stores (up to 10,000 sq.m.) are now a well established form of retail development and clearly meet strong customer demand for convenient car-borne weekly shopping.
  - (b) Large retail warehouses have been successful in catering for bulky goods, and by taking these heavy car-borne shopping requirements out of town centres have positively helped centres by relieving traffic congestion.

Both these types of development can make use of derelict or neglected sites.

### Non-Retail Uses within Shopping Areas

- 5.13 Development Control Policy Note No. 11 distinguishes between primary and secondary shopping areas. The Note may be summarised as follows:-
- (a) If a Local Plan has a policy excluding a use from a certain location but makes no provision for this use elsewhere it would not be possible to justify refusing all applications for that particular use unless there is evidence to show the area to be particularly unsuitable for it.

- (b) Larger shopping centres may be divided into two types of area:-
- i) Primary Area: dominated by shops (A1 use)
  - ii) Secondary Area: a mix of shopping and service uses (i.e. A1, A2 and A3 uses)
- Policies designed to maintain or strengthen the dominant retail element by restricting or controlling non-retail uses may be justified in primary shopping areas but will not normally be justified in secondary shopping areas.
- (c) In smaller shopping areas (such as small suburban shopping parades) the maintenance of the retail element may be important.
  - (d) The assessment of the level of non-retail uses which can be accommodated in any centre should not be solely dependent on the number of outlets or proportions of frontages or floorspace but should always take into account the type of shopping centre, the trends in usage and the views of those who trade and shop there.
  - (e) The question of whether any particular non-retail service is already sufficiently represented in a shopping centre is a matter for commercial judgement and is not a planning consideration.
  - (f) Non-retail uses within a shopping centre can be required by condition to provide a window display, but such a condition should only be imposed when it is justified.

5.14 The recently revised General Development Order may have implications for established shopping centres. As a result of the Order, planning permission is no longer required for changes of use from Class A3 (Food and Drink) to A2 (Financial and Professional Services). In general, A2 uses yield higher rental income than A3 uses and they could increase their concentration within core shopping areas at the expense of restaurants and other catering outlets which complement shopping areas.

### **Regional Guidance**

5.15 There is at present no regional policy on retailing. However, SERPLAN have published a consultation document entitled "Towards a Policy for Regional Shopping Centres" in response to the number of applications for freestanding centres of approximately 1 million square feet (approx. 100,000m<sup>2</sup>). The guidance recommends consultation between authorities on out of town centre proposals over 100,000 sq.ft. gross (approx. 10,000m<sup>2</sup>). It states that special regard should be had to the important role that established centres play. A recent study of retail provision within 30 minutes drive of the M25 by SERPLAN identifies the A2 corridor in North Kent as an area where strategic shopping provision should be enhanced as there is a qualitative deficiency. The Study concludes that there is strong justification for further investment in town centres prior to 1996 and that there is scope for physical upgrading and town centre management and promotion.

### **Structure Plan Policy**

5.16 Structure Plan policies seek primarily to support the role and function of established town centres. Existing town or district centres are the preferred locations for large food stores. Where suitable sites are not available they should be sited in accessible locations. The Medway Towns (Western Sector) is



identified as an area with space for further large food store developments. Structure Plan Policy RD3 gives a general presumption in favour of retail warehousing for bulky goods subject to environmental and traffic considerations and there being no serious implications for the supply of housing and industrial land. It states that local plans should make provision for multi-unit retail warehouse parks where this is justified. Policy RD4 makes it clear that retail developments, dealing primarily with comparison goods, will normally be accommodated in existing town centres. However, "in very exceptional circumstances" new free-standing shopping developments based on extensive catchment potentials may be permitted where they would complement existing town centres.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- 5.17 An analysis of retailing trends together with estimates of retail turnover and expenditure in centres within the Medway Towns sets the context for Local Plan objectives and policies, subject to the guidance provided at National, Regional and Structure Plan levels. The main objective for retailing in the Medway Towns is to ensure that there is a wide range of retail facilities in order to provide consumer choice to all members of the public. This main objective is to be achieved through the following secondary objectives:-
- (a) Maintaining and enhancing the role of Chatham as a sub-Regional centre which is easily accessible to the public.
  - (b) Maintaining and enhancing the role of District and Local centres which provide easily accessible facilities to local residents. District centres comprise Gillingham, Rainham, Strood and Rochester. Smaller centres of note are termed Local centres.
  - (c) Providing new retail developments which increase customer choice within the towns but do not conflict with the roles of the identified centres.
  - (d) Ensuring that all centres provide a range of facilities for the public while retaining the essential retail element of the centre.
  - (e) Protecting the specialist function of Rochester High Street.

## **THE FUTURE OF EXISTING CENTRES**

- 5.18 Retail centres serve many functions and, for this reason, it is important that the objectives set out above are interpreted with other policies and objectives contained within the Plan. In order to clarify the proposed future of these centres the following summaries have been included. They comprise a short assessment and an account of the strategy to be pursued for each centre.

### **Chatham**

#### **Existing Situation**

- 5.19 Chatham may be classified as a sub-Regional centre and it is the main shopping centre for the Medway Towns, particularly for comparison goods. It has about 132,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, 65% of which is for comparison goods, 11% convenience, service 7% and vacant 7%. Its estimated turnover is double that of other centres, which could be a function not only of floorspace but also the high number of multiples present (55% of floorspace). The multiples and other major retailers are located in an area between Batchelor Street and Military Road, including the ground floor of the Pentagon Centre. This area is predominantly in retail use with financial and professional services being located in the retail areas outside this central core. In recent years the town centre has been adversely affected by

a number of factors. Firstly, the closure of the Dockyard in 1984 severely affected the economy of the area and secondly, the disruption caused by the construction of Chatham Ring Road and the pedestrianisation of part of the High Street have undoubtedly affected people's perception of the centre. However with these major schemes scheduled for completion shortly and with a growing level of consumer expenditure, the opportunities for the upgrading of the centre are considerable. Such development would reinforce Chatham's position as a sub-Regional centre.

#### Future Strategy

- 5.20 It is intended to encourage major retail development to locate within Chatham town centre so that it may overcome the difficulties of the early 1980's and provide a wide range of consumer goods and ancillary uses as might be expected of a major retail centre catering for a population of 250,000. Chatham is to be promoted as the main focus for expanding the quantitative and qualitative retail provision within the Medway Towns necessary to meet the rapidly growing demand from the local population. Past studies have indicated that Chatham contains many desirable facilities which may be used as a base on which future developments can build. The importance of Chatham town centre cannot be over emphasised as it not only provides for the surrounding large population but, for less mobile elements of the population, it represents the most accessible centre for comparison goods shopping.
- 5.21 In the past Chatham town centre has been blighted by economic factors and proposed road schemes, but the local economy has changed dramatically and the Chatham Ring Road is now nearing completion. Therefore the prospects for the centre are much more favourable and this has led to the identification of major retail opportunities. The town centre environment has been improved with the pedestrianisation of the High Street from Railway Street to The Brook and further pedestrianisation to Manor Road is proposed together with surface treatment to Military Road and Railway Street. The City of Rochester upon Medway is also proposing a landscaping scheme for the whole of the town centre.
- 5.22 As well as environmental improvements, the City Council will seek to promote sites for additional covered shopping malls which are well related to the existing prime shopping areas. Such developments will add to the overall attractiveness of the town centre as they provide quality retail units in a controlled environment. Other developments which are suitable ancillary uses to a town centre of this size, such as offices, will also be encouraged providing they do not conflict with the retail function of the centre. (See Policy E6)
- 5.23 The car is becoming increasingly important in shopping trips and if the town centre is to become more attractive to the public, improved parking provision and a refurbishment of some existing parking areas will need to be undertaken. New developments within the town centre will be assessed as to their possible contribution to the overall level of car parking provided within the centre. Local Plan policies for the town centre are shown on the Chatham Town Centre Inset Plan.

#### Gillingham Town Centre

##### Existing Situation

- 5.24 Gillingham Town Centre may be classified as a higher level District centre in the shopping hierarchy. It has undergone a change over the past two decades, and it now performs the function of a District rather than a Primary centre. Indicative of its former function is the high percentage of comparison goods floorspace (52%). The change in the role of the centre appears due to a number of factors and is reflected in the small size of units occupied by multiples (33% of floorspace), and their limited range of stock, vacancy rates within peripheral

areas and the change of use to service uses. There is still, however, an identifiable core area which is predominantly in retail use. This "core area" is between the Skinner Street and King Street junction with the High Street. The pedestrianisation of the centre in the late 1970's created a more attractive shopping environment. A new supermarket and car park development was completed in 1986 in order to rejuvenate the western end of the town centre. However, further improvements are required if the centre is to meet increasing competition from other centres and maintain its current position in the shopping hierarchy.

#### Future Strategy

- 5.25 Gillingham Town Centre has capacity to take new major retail investment. The continued protection of the existing prime shopping area is important so as to protect and where possible enhance the present level of retail provision.
- 5.26 There are a number of opportunities in Gillingham for redevelopment initiatives, environmental improvements and traffic management measures. Four sites have been identified where redevelopment could bring benefits:
- i) The western end of the High Street offers an opportunity for a major scheme in connection with the proposed new road link from Jeffery Street to Mill Road. Such a project would also enable further pedestrianisation and environmental improvements to be considered in Arden Street and the western end of the High Street. A redevelopment scheme of this type could include leisure and office premises mixed with residential accommodation particularly aimed at small households.
  - ii) At the eastern end of the High Street between King Street and the Station a mixed redevelopment scheme with a strong retail component could advance highway requirements and consolidate the retail centre.
  - iii) Redevelopment of a site abutting Green Street and High Street would require the relocation of a number of established uses but would provide an opportunity to reinforce the retail core of the centre. The likely scale of development would be compatible with the centre's position in the local shopping hierarchy.
  - iv) A site adjoining Jeffery Street and James Street may allow additional parking facilities to be provided and the appearance of Jeffery Street to be up-graded.
- 5.27 Residential development on suitable sites in proximity to the town centre could have several advantages. It would contribute to and support the role of Gillingham as a District centre and add vitality to the area after shopping hours. Benefits would accrue to the occupants of new dwellings in being close to shops and services.
- 5.28 The Borough Council intends to consolidate the shopping function of the centre by resisting non-retail uses in the area of the High Street between King Street and Skinner Street. Elsewhere changes of use to office based services will be permitted. This approach will be accompanied by traffic management schemes which will enable further environmental improvement and pedestrian priority in the town centre. The Borough Council is currently considering upgrading the existing pedestrianisation scheme.
- 5.29 The policies and proposals relating to Gillingham Town Centre are illustrated on the larger scale Town Centre Inset Plan and will be made the subject of development and design briefs for individual sites and initiatives.

## Rainham

### Existing Situation

- 5.30 Historically, retailing in Rainham was located along the A2 and Station Road. However, in the late 1970's, a retail centre was built between the High Street and Station Road which contains mainly convenience stores. This pedestrianised centre and associated car parking has moved the focus of retailing from the roadside to the new centre. As a result, there are a number of vacant units along the A2. Many of these units are disadvantaged not only by their location and small size but also by the poor physical environment. Over a quarter of the available floorspace is given over to convenience goods and 33% to comparison goods. A low percentage of floorspace is occupied by multiples (28%), and the remainder of floorspace is divided between services (32%) and vacancies (5%). This pattern is typical of a District centre serving local needs, especially for food. The core area is identified as being the new shopping development, while all other locations are considered as secondary areas.

### Future Strategy

- 5.31 Rainham is a very successful District centre serving residential areas to the east of Gillingham. The provision of a modern pedestrianised shopping centre and associated car parking facilities has done much to ensure the overall success of the centre and assisted it to withstand competition from other centres in the Local Plan Area. However, the original shopping area which fronts the A2 Watling Street suffers from a poor environment and pedestrian/vehicle conflicts which exist along this very busy route. Its rundown appearance together with vacant units, particularly at the periphery of the centre, bear witness to this.
- 5.32 Whilst no major change in the function of Rainham is envisaged during the Local Plan period, it is important to encourage and maintain its role as a District centre. In order to achieve this, protection of retail frontages within the pedestrianised area will be required, although service uses will be both acceptable and encouraged outside this primary retail area, provided they are appropriate in scale and character to the existing centre.
- 5.33 In order to maintain the vitality of the centre and improve its attractiveness to shoppers, some major environmental improvements will be required. The key to this will be the construction of the Rainham Southern By-Pass which will remove heavy through traffic from this part of Watling Street. This will in turn permit additional car parking and pedestrianisation schemes which will make for a more pleasant shopping environment. Further environmental improvement schemes and schemes for vacant sites or non-conforming uses will be needed to enhance the centre and make a more attractive setting for the wealth of buildings of architectural and historic interest in the Conservation Area to the east of the District Centre. Whilst the policies and proposals relating to Rainham town centre are shown on the Town Centre Inset Plan, improvements and any projects relating to the Conservation Area itself will be the subject of more detailed development briefs.

## Strood

### Existing Situation

- 5.34 The main shopping area in Strood is located along the High Street (the A2). This is, however, a major route into the Medway Towns and severe vehicular/pedestrian conflicts arise. Strood is similar to Rainham in having a fairly high level of convenience food floorspace (26%) but the percentage of comparison goods floorspace is below that of Chatham (44%). It also has a relatively low percentage of floorspace occupied by multiples (38%). The remainder of the

floorspace comprises service uses (20%) and vacant uses (9%). This floorspace pattern, together with physical characteristics of the centre (e.g. its size) indicates that Strood serves a Local or District-wide function in the shopping hierarchy. Strood Centre although possessing certain advantages such as two large convenience stores and several large surface level car parks, suffers from the division of the centre by major through roads. Even if this problem were to be overcome, the quality of the environment in the centre is still poor in comparison with other similar centres. The area is also under considerable pressures for non-retail uses, such as Class A2, to locate in existing shop premises. To allow the introduction of such uses without restraint would undermine the importance of Strood as a District centre and its ability to cater for the needs of those in the immediate vicinity. The incidence of non-retail uses represents a proportion of 25% of the length of the ground floor parade frontage to the High Street (between the junctions with Commercial Road to the west and east). It is the intention of the Local Planning Authorities that this threshold figure should not be exceeded. In the early/mid-1990's, the construction of the Strood Ring Road could allow for the eventual pedestrianisation of the High Street and a substantial improvement in the shopping environment.

#### Future Strategy

- 5.35 Since the development of two major food stores, Strood has proved to be a fairly successful District centre. The physical dissection of the town centre means however that a primary shopping area has been rather difficult to define. The allocation of two sites for retail development adjoining the central shopping area has enabled the identification of both primary and secondary shopping areas. The construction of the Strood Ring Road will allow for the possible pedestrianisation of part of the High Street. This, together with an overall improvement to the environment achieved by the removal of traffic, will enhance the centre.

#### Hempstead Valley

##### Existing Situation

- 5.36 Hempstead Valley is a free-standing District centre completed in the early 1980's and is an example of a successful modern shopping complex. The circulation areas between stores are completely covered and well lit and there is good external and internal landscaping. The circulation area also provides space for small stalls which add interest to the shopping environment. As this is a managed centre there is little visible deterioration in the fixtures and litter is minimal. Parking provision is good (it has the highest parking spaces to floorspace ratio of any centre in the Local Plan Area).
- 5.37 Hempstead Valley is not a typical District centre as it has over 80% of its floorspace occupied by national multiples and approximately 90% of its floorspace is retail use. Its estimated turnover ratio is also higher than that projected for Chatham town centre. This purpose built managed centre achieves this profile by accommodating both retailers' requirements and customers' expectations.
- 5.38 Notwithstanding these differences and the centre's obvious popularity, the centre still provides a "District" rather than "sub-Regional" function. For although its catchment area is wider than other District centres within the towns, due to its availability to cater for the car borne shopper, its range of comparison goods is still somewhat limited as the main attraction of the centre are two large food units.

##### Future Strategy

- 5.39 This free-standing centre has been very successful and this has resulted in the diversion of retail expenditure away from Chatham and Gillingham town centres. The centre now sits easily within the retail hierarchy of the Medway Towns and further expansion of this facility to keep pace with consumer demand is to be

encouraged by the Local Planning Authorities. Future expansion will incorporate the necessary car parking and maintain a high standard of design. Such an expansion will not be at such a level as to compromise the viability or vitality of Chatham town centre but should be complementary to the provision of new floor space in Chatham town centre.

## Rochester

### Existing Situation

- 5.40 Rochester, like Gillingham, has undergone a change in its role in the retail hierarchy. Historically the centre of retailing within the Medway Towns, it has more recently functioned as a Local centre serving the resident population and as a specialist centre.
- 5.41 Rochester, due to its historic environment, has been prevented from accommodating a large convenience store which is now the linchpin of a District centre. In commercial terms the proximity of both Chatham and Strood town centres tends to mitigate against further investment of this type within the centre.
- 5.42 Rochester has therefore had to diversify from its former District role. Indications of this changing role are the loss of 14% of its retail floorspace since 1976, the small percentage of convenience floorspace (5%) compared to other centres, and the small number of multiples within the centre. The centre has responded to the changing retail environment by diversifying into specialist shops and tourist related uses (both in terms of shops and services). Such a diversification is possible because of the age of buildings in the High Street, its historic connections with author Charles Dickens and its proximity to Rochester Castle and Cathedral. If retail and retail related uses are to continue successfully in this centre it is important that market led changes are supported.
- 5.43 The quality of the environment within the High Street makes it an attractive place to live as well as shop. The Local Planning Authority will therefore continue to encourage the use of upper floors of High Street properties in particular for residential use. In order to progress this aim, the Local Planning Authority will, in appropriate circumstances, consider the relaxation of parking standards for this type of development in this location.

### Future Strategy

- 5.44 Rochester High Street has a dual function operating both as a specialist retail centre and a tourist centre. Both these functions rely on the attractive environment created by the many old buildings which make up the High Street. The Local Planning Authority has undertaken a number of projects to protect this important environment, most notably the restriction of through traffic and surface treatments to the highway which, together with replacement street furniture and Town Scheme grants, have helped to improve the High Street shopping environment.
- 5.45 Rochester High Street is important both for its specialist retail function and its service function to the tourism trade. Therefore, whilst a primary retail area cannot be defined due to the diversity of uses along the High Street, the Local Planning Authority considers it necessary to resist the loss of retail or service uses within the main commercial part of the High Street. The Local Planning Authority also proposes to continue the Town Scheme grant for buildings requiring maintenance and repair in order to continue to enhance the environment. There will be a continuing scheme of environmental improvements for the whole of the High Street.

## Local Centres

### Existing Situation

- 5.46 There are a number of Local centres within the Plan Area. Although these differ in character, most play an important role in meeting convenience shopping needs. Local centres contain approximately 36% of the convenience floorspace within the Local Plan Area. Comparison floorspace within Local centres is less important and much of the comparison floorspace requirement is met in other locations (Local centres only contain 18% of the Local Plan Area's total comparison floorspace).
- 5.47 The importance of Local centres is not a function of their size but of their location which is much closer to residential areas than other larger retail centres. They provide facilities to the less mobile members of the public and the loss or contraction of local centres would result in a reduction of choice. They are also important as locations for community facilities.

### Future Strategy

- 5.48 It is important that there should be general support for the limited growth of Local centres or the establishment of new centres where there is a growth in consumer demand. It is however important that development related to these Local centres does not have an impact on existing town centres where there has been a long tradition of private and public investment. Local centres will be encouraged to meet local needs especially for those less mobile elements of the population.

## POLICIES AND REASONED JUSTIFICATION

### Major Retail Development

- 5.49 A number of sites identified in Policy R5, which are within or close to the retail centres, are capable of accommodating large retail developments. These sites are well related to the transport network, provide the opportunity for car parking and adjoin an improving retail environment. Recent growth in retail expenditure has been in the comparison goods sector, which may be subdivided into bulky and non-bulky goods. Two thirds of expenditure on comparison goods is on non-bulky goods and, as such, there can be few operational reasons why additional floorspace catering for this expenditure growth in such goods should not be provided within the existing town centres.
- 5.50 Directing this growth into the established centres, particularly Chatham, will build on the substantial levels of investment made in environmental and structural improvement and ensure that the centres provide choice for all consumers. It will redress the imbalance between expenditure and turnover on comparison goods which currently exists in the Plan Area and reinforce the standing of the Medway Towns within the surrounding area.

**Policy R1 Major retail development (defined as being in excess of 2,000 sq.m) shall normally be located within the main retail centres listed below (as defined on the Proposals Map). Development proposals shall normally be permitted in the main retail centres provided they:**

- i) Enhance the shopping functions of the retail centre in terms of quality, range and choice of retailing facilities;
- ii) Improve the quality of the visual and functional environments;  
and
- iii) Accommodate traffic and car parking in a way which enhances the attractions of the retail centre in terms of user convenience and the environment.

The main retail centres are identified as Chatham, Rochester, Strood, Gillingham, Rainham, Hempstead Valley, Gillingham Business Park and Horsted Retail Park.

Major retail development proposals outside the main retail centres should accord with policies R2, R3, R4 or R6 as appropriate.

Note: The threshold of 2,000 square metres is for guidance only and proposals that would result in this general level of new gross floorspace provision will normally be subject to the above criteria.

### Major Food Stores

5.51 The assessment of convenience expenditure growth in the Medway Towns does not indicate that there is a quantitative need for a large amount of convenience floorspace above the existing provision. However, there may be a qualitative justification for another large convenience store. The location of such a store should be such that it can serve a large local residential population and should not be solely dependent on attracting car borne shoppers from the Medway Towns in general. It is important that any such development does not have a serious detrimental effect on large convenience stores in the town centres which serve some of the less mobile sectors of the community.

**Policy R2** Sites within the main retail centres (as defined on the Proposals Map but excluding Gillingham Business Park and Horsted Retail Park) are the preferred locations for major new foodstore development. Where such sites are not available or are highly constrained by physical, traffic or operational factors, alternative sites may be appropriate. In such cases proposals will be assessed against each of the following criteria:

- i) Proposals should not, individually or cumulatively with other out of centre developments, adversely affect the overall vitality and viability of an existing centre.
- ii) Proposals should be well related to the primary road network, be accessible by car and public transport and have adequate servicing and local traffic management arrangements.
- iii) Proposals should avoid any material conflict with other major land use allocations, particularly the supply of land for housing, economic development and open space use.
- iv) Proposals should not conflict with countryside conservation policies or be materially detrimental to local environmental conditions.

### Bulky Goods

5.52 "Bulky goods" is a general term which refers to retailers specialising in D.I.Y./home improvement products, furniture/carpets, garden products and certain other specialised types of outlet, e.g. auto centres. In recent years consumer expenditure on such items has increased and there are many instances where the out of centre location of retailers dealing specifically with these items has not adversely affected town centres as a whole. In the Medway Towns expenditure on such items is likely to increase by some 52% up to 1996 (approximately £50 million at 1981 prices).



**Policy R3** Policy R4 makes specific provision for the increased demand for bulky goods floorspace and further development opportunities may be available within the main retail centres (as defined on the Proposals Map). Where such sites are not available or are highly constrained by physical, traffic or operational factors, alternative locations may be appropriate. In such cases proposals will be assessed against each of the following criteria:

- i) Proposals should not individually or cumulatively with other out of centre developments, adversely affect the overall vitality and viability of an existing centre.
- ii) Proposals should be well related to the primary road network, be accessible by car and public transport and have adequate servicing and traffic management arrangements.
- iii) Proposals should avoid any material conflict with other major land use allocations particularly the supply of land for housing, economic development and open space use.
- iv) Proposals should not conflict with countryside conservation policies or be materially detrimental to local environmental conditions.

5.53

It is important that provision is made for different forms of retail development so as to provide a choice of retail environments. The location and nature of these developments can be a sensitive issue as they may have a direct effect on existing centres. Land to the north-east of Frindsbury has been identified as having potential in meeting the growing demand for comparison goods floorspace (and in particular "bulky goods") and has additional potential in meeting the qualitative need for a large convenience store in this location. In recognition of the cumulative impact that the development of this and other major sites within the Wainscott area will have upon the local highway network, the development of the site to the north-east of Frindsbury for retail use will be dependent upon the completion of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road.

**Policy R4** It is proposed that the site to the north-east of Frindsbury identified on the Proposals Map shall be developed to meet the increased demand for "bulky goods" floorspace and/or the locally generated demand for convenience floorspace. This development shall be dependent upon the completion of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road.

## DEVELOPMENT WITHIN MAIN RETAIL CENTRES

### New Retail Development

5.54

In order to maintain and enhance the retail function of Chatham town centre certain sites have been identified to meet some of the growing demand for comparison goods floorspace. Two smaller areas of opportunity have also been identified for Strood town centre. These sites are well related to the "primary shopping area" as identified in Policy R8 and they provide the opportunity to achieve a substantial modern floorspace with associated facilities. This will act as a further attraction for shoppers and will reduce the net imbalance of consumer expenditure within the Plan Area.

**Policy R5** The sites listed below and defined on the Proposals Map are considered suitable for major retail development in accordance with Policy R1.

#### Chatham

- i) Richard Street Car Park/Invicta Cinema Site (27,800m<sup>2</sup>)

- ii) Scotts Timber Yard (20,800m<sup>2</sup>)
- iii) Slicketts Hill (7,000,m<sup>2</sup>)
- iv) New Cut/Railway Street (6,250m<sup>2</sup>)

Strood

- i) Friary Precinct (3,000m<sup>2</sup>)
- ii) Commercial Road Car Park/Dutton Forshaw (2,000m<sup>2</sup>)

5.55 Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre provides the Medway Towns with a modern centre capable of accommodating car borne shoppers from the whole Local Plan Area and beyond. This provides an alternative to town centre shopping environments and is particularly successful in catering for the large one stop convenience shopping trip, as it has a large surface level car park and covered shopping malls. It is important that this facility retains its viability in competition with other similar developments in North West Kent.

**Policy R6** The site at Hempstead Valley (Phase 2 (8,250m<sup>2</sup>)) and as defined on the Proposals Map is considered suitable for retail development in accordance with Policy R1.

5.56 In Gillingham and Rainham town centres a number of sites have been identified where a mixed use redevelopment, parking and environmental improvement schemes could take place and make a significant contribution to the functioning and urban fabric of a particular centre. These sites are identified on the Proposals Map. Detailed development and design briefs will be prepared to guide future development and improvement.

**Policy R7** At the sites shown on the Proposals Map as town centre opportunity sites, sympathetic consideration will be given to mixed use redevelopment incorporating environmental improvements, parking provision and traffic management initiatives subject to the proposals being in accordance with other Policies of the Local Plan.

**Loss of Retail in Primary Shopping Areas**

5.57 The attraction of people to a shopping centre is dependent upon many factors such as its size, location, access, number and range of shops and other facilities. The vitality of a centre will be dependent on the number of people it can attract and the Local Planning Authorities and private sector have invested heavily in existing centres to improve and enhance them. In order to complement this and to strengthen the popularity of the centres, it is essential that an identifiable "retail core" is maintained. For this purpose, "Primary Shopping Areas" have been identified as areas where there is an existing predominance of shops and where the weakening of the retail function of the area would seriously affect the character of the central areas as a whole. It is important to emphasise that the "Primary Areas" do not cover the whole of the main shopping areas but just central parts where the highest pedestrian flows and retail turnovers occur. The remainder of the shopping areas are defined as "Secondary Areas" and such areas will have a greater mixture of central area uses.

**Policy R8** Proposals for non-retail development or a change of use from shop (Class A1) to a non-retail use will normally be refused within the Primary Shopping Areas of the following centres as defined on the Proposals Map:-

- i) Chatham High Street between Military Road/Railway Street and Batchelor Street/Rhode Street.

- ii) Gillingham High Street, Nos. 82-142 even, Nos. 77-163 odd.
- iii) Rainham, District Shopping Centre, High Street Nos. 49-107 odd.
- iv) Strood High Street, Nos. 46-120 even, Nos. 65-143 odd, Friary Precinct Nos. 2-4 and Nos. 13-17 North Street.

#### **Professional and Financial Services**

5.58 Professional and Financial Services are covered by Use Class A2 introduced by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended. The Use Class was specifically introduced to allow Local Authorities to grant permission for these uses more readily within shopping areas. Banks and Building Societies have long been part of the established shopping street scene and now new financial or personal services have been identified as being appropriate to a shopping area. These new services often do not have "blank" frontages and can attract as many customers as some shops. It is therefore necessary to allow these services to locate within the retail centres and not to concentrate them into small areas on the periphery. However, the continued protection of the "Primary Shopping Area" for retailing is still necessary for the reasons explained in paragraph 5.57.

**Policy R9** Subject to Policies R8 and R11 there will normally be a presumption in favour of proposals for the creation of new floorspace or a change of use for Professional or Financial services (Class A2) within the main retail centres (as defined in Policy R1). Proposals will however be assessed against the following factors:

- i) The impact of traffic and/or pedestrian flows generated by the use
- ii) The cumulative effect of these uses in any particular location upon the vitality and viability of the town centre and the amenity of the surrounding residential properties.

#### **Food and Drink**

5.59 Food and Drink uses are covered by Use Class A3 introduced in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. This Class was introduced to allow the catering trade to adapt to changing trends with greater speed and certainty in premises where potential environmental nuisances such as smell, traffic and parking have already been accepted. In some circumstances, the location of a particular service within this Use Class will influence peoples' decision to visit a centre, and generally it is accepted that these uses add to the services available in the main retail centres. However, it is important that a concentration of these uses in any particular area does not reach a level where the combined effect becomes seriously detrimental to the environment or amenity of the area. Only in exceptional circumstances are such uses appropriate within the 'Primary Shopping Area'.

**Policy R10** Subject to Policy R8 there will normally be a presumption in favour of proposals for the creation of new floorspace or a change of use for Food and Drink uses (Class A3) within the main retail centres (as defined in Policy R1). Proposals will, however, be assessed against the following factors:

- i) The effect of traffic and pedestrian flows generated by the use is acceptable.

- ii) There is no scenic loss of amenity for adjoining property.
- iii) There is no undue concentration of such uses in any particular location.

#### Area of Special Control: Rochester High Street

5.60 Rochester High Street between Star Hill and Rochester Bridge is an exceptional area in terms of its environmental quality. In retailing terms it does not display similar characteristics to other centres within the Local Plan Area. Rochester has a low percentage of convenience goods and a high percentage of comparison goods floorspace and service floorspace. The reason for this is twofold, firstly the attractive physical character of Rochester High Street has prevented redevelopment which would provide modern units which are of a size and form to attract the major multiples and secondly, the change in shopping habits as discussed in the introduction tends to lead to a contraction of this type of centre. The commercial sector has responded to these changes in two ways, either providing a more specialist facility which is not available elsewhere within the towns (e.g. high quality clothing or delicatessens) or by catering for the growing tourist trade (e.g. confectioners or antiques). Notwithstanding the provisions of the General Development Order (which in certain circumstances allows for a change of use without planning permission from Class A3 to Class A2), it is considered that the Professional and Personal Services are already well represented within Rochester High Street and, due to the specialist nature of the centre, there is less justification for the location of any additional floorspace for this use. Any significant additional use of this type or other non-retail or service use would be detrimental to the overall character of the centre both in terms as a location for specialist retailers and as an attraction for tourists.

**Policy R11** Proposals for new ground floor uses for a use other than that of Shop (Class A1) or Food and Drink (Class A3), in the retail centre of Rochester, will normally be refused unless it provides the only opportunity for restoring a building of architectural or historic interest.

### DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE MAIN RETAIL CENTRES

#### Minor Retail Development

5.61 Small scale shopping development to serve very localised needs has been a feature of the Medway Towns for many years. Although many such premises are now facing increased competition from town centres and out of town complexes, the improvement of these small units or the introduction of new units should not be discouraged where there are no traffic or amenity reasons for refusal. Such premises provide a facility for those members of the community with severe mobility problems or who work long or unsociable hours. The role of Local centres within the Medway Towns is important in providing local choice in retailing and other services to particular communities and the Local Plan will seek to consolidate their position in the shopping hierarchy by resisting inappropriate changes of use.

**Policy R12** In Local centres there will be a presumption against the change of use of existing retail, service and community uses at ground floor level to other uses.

**Policy R13 Proposals for the creation of new floorspace or a change of use for minor retail development will normally be considered favourably outside the main retail centres provided that:-**

- i) The traffic and pedestrian flows generated by the use are not seriously detrimental to surrounding uses**
- ii) The proposal is in character with the surrounding land uses and would not be seriously detrimental to residential amenity**

#### **Professional and Financial Services**

5.62 Outside the main retail centres it is intended that the development of financial and professional services should be concentrated in suitable Local centre locations. Such uses often benefit by being concentrated together and sporadic development in primarily residential areas is to be discouraged. However, it is important that such uses do not become over represented in any one local area to the detriment of its retail function. Where this has already occurred there will be a presumption in favour of the re-establishment of retail uses.

**Policy R14 The creation of new floorspace or change of use to Professional or Financial services (A2 uses) shall normally be refused outside the main retail centres (as defined on the Proposals Map) unless:-**

- i) The proposal is within an existing (or proposed) Local centre or forms part of a continuous commercial frontage**
- ii) The traffic and pedestrian flows generated by the use are not detrimental to surrounding uses; and**
- iii) The proposal will not result in the proportion of non shopping uses within the Local centre exceeding the level where the vitality and viability of the Local centre will be adversely affected.**

#### **Food and Drink**

5.63 Food and Drink uses cover a particularly wide spectrum of services, from the local public house or take-away, to a large prestigious restaurant set within its own grounds. All these uses can have a high level of vehicle or pedestrian flows associated with them, sometimes at unsociable hours. It is important when considering the location of such uses that the amenities of the surrounding area are taken into consideration. Generally, the location of these uses within Local centres (which are less sensitive than residential areas) is acceptable providing that normal criteria are met. Outside these Local centres, the location of such uses becomes problematic and they would usually be refused on amenity grounds unless the proposed use is incorporated in a large development proposal which can satisfactorily integrate the use into the existing environment. An example of this could be a restaurant or bar associated with a leisure complex or housing development.

**Policy R15 The creation of new floorspace or change of use to a Food or Drink use (A3) will normally be refused outside the main retail centres (as defined on the Proposals Map) unless:-**

- i) The proposal is within an existing (or proposed) Local centre, or forms part of a large development proposal which is in conformity with other policies contained within the Plan**

- ii) The traffic and pedestrian flows generated by the use are not detrimental to surrounding uses
- iii) The proportion of non-shopping uses within a Local centre will not, as a result of the proposal, exceed a level where the vitality and viability of the centre will be adversely affected; and
- iv) The proposal will not, either by itself or in conjunction with existing similar uses or permissions, be detrimental to the amenities of the surrounding area.

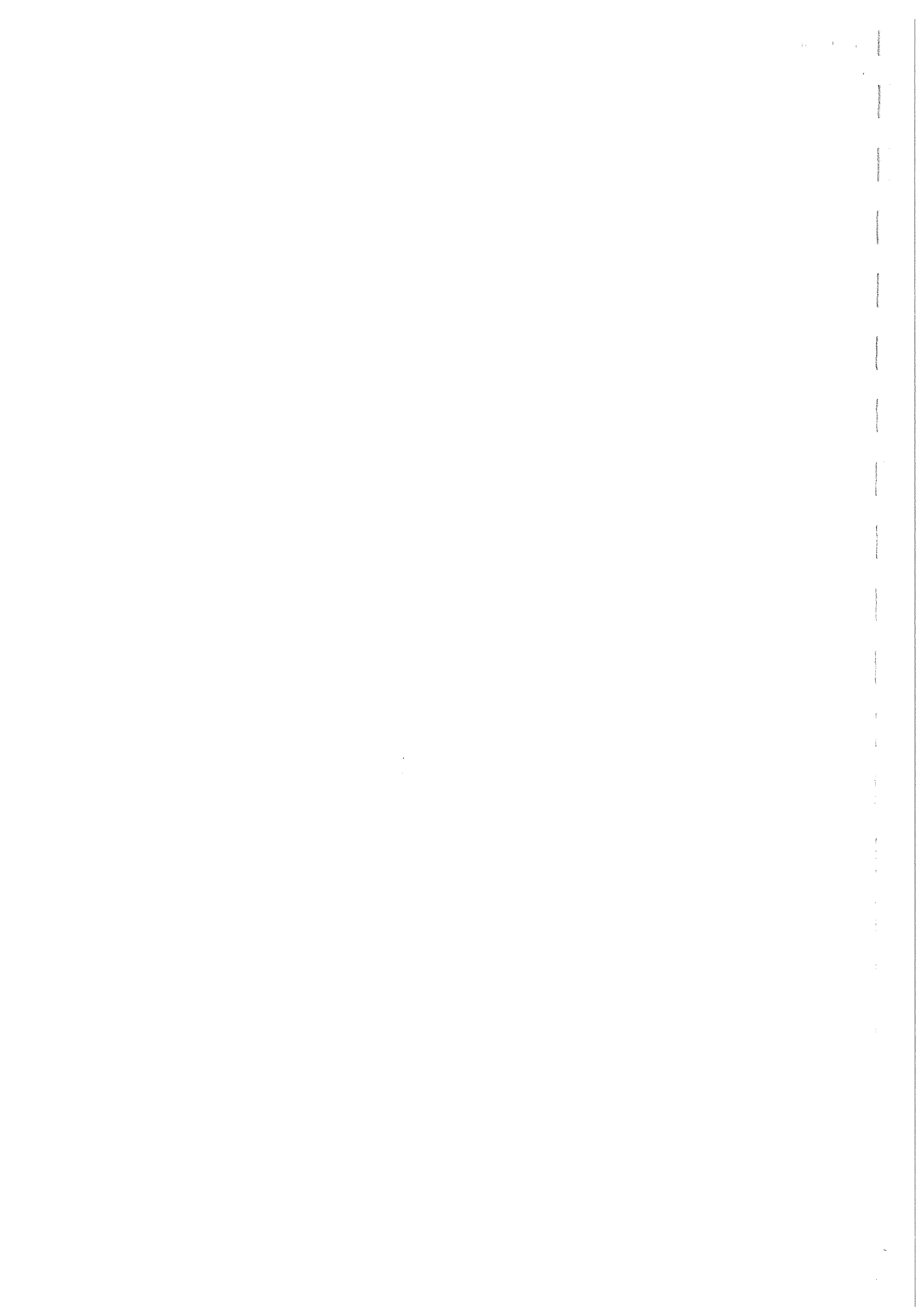
#### **Retail Provision and New Residential Development**

5.64

It is important that provision is made for shopping facilities in Local centres to serve new residential areas. Chatham Maritime and St. Mary's Island are two such areas and local provision here will be important as they are not within easy reach of other Local centres or the major existing centres. Halling, High Halstow and Lower Upnor are housing developments of a size capable of supporting retail facilities.

**Policy R16** In association with major residential development the following sites are considered suitable for the establishment of new local shopping facilities to meet daily needs of residents, workers and visitors:-

- i) St. Mary's Island proposed Neighbourhood Centre.
- ii) Main Centre, Chatham Maritime.
- iii) Halling
- iv) High Halstow
- v) Lower Upnor



## 6. TRANSPORTATION

### ISSUES

#### Introduction

- 6.01 The Medway Towns are strategically located in relation to the national road network. The area has good road and rail links with Central London, has deep water docks and is within easy access of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports, the Channel seaports and the Channel Tunnel.
- 6.02 The main responsibility for highways and transport within the Local Plan Area lies with the Kent County Council as the Local Highway Authority. However the Department of Transport is responsible for the M2 motorway and the A2 Trunk Road to the west of the A2/M2 intersection at Three Crutches. The City of Rochester upon Medway and Gillingham Borough Council act as Agents for the County Council for traffic management and routine maintenance of roads, other than trunk roads, within the area covered by the Local Plan. Kent County Council are the Department of Transport's Agent Authority for the A2 and M2 motorway.
- 6.03 Under the provisions of the Transport Act 1985, the County Council has powers to secure the provision of such socially necessary public transport services as it considers appropriate but which are not provided commercially. The District Councils have responsibility for the provision and management of all off-street car parks.

#### Roads

- 6.04 Current traffic demand in the Local Plan Area is generally already beyond the practical capacity of the main road network. The main problem is the considerable traffic congestion which occurs along the A2 spine road through the centres of Strood, Rochester, Chatham and Rainham, particularly at the Rochester Bridge over the River Medway. The traffic flow conflicts with major north/south flows between the commercial areas in the north and the residential areas of the south. The congestion causes delay to both public and private transport alike, leads to poor environmental standards in town centres and pedestrian/vehicular conflict. The large number of heavy lorries passing through the urban area is of particular concern. The M2 motorway skirts around the southern boundary of the urban area and allows London to East Kent/cross Channel traffic to bypass the Medway Towns. However, this also is subject to congestion at peak times especially on the hills leading away from the River Medway. The A2 and M2 are the only river crossings in the area covered by the Local Plan.
- 6.05 Traffic demands will further increase due to population growth resulting from committed new residential development, economic growth and rising car ownership. The expected increase in traffic in the Local Plan Area is at least 45% between 1986 and 2001. Limited funds for new road construction, which could impede the future development of the Medway Towns, has also meant a considerable reliance on traffic management techniques to increase highway capacity.
- 6.06 However, there are a number of important new road improvement proposals supported by the Local Planning Authorities which could alleviate some of the problems of road congestion. The largest of these is the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road (M.T.N.R.R.) proposal. This major scheme consists of three main elements: the Wainscott Northern Bypass, the Medway Crossing (via a tunnel) and the Gillingham Northern Link. It would produce major traffic benefits in terms of relieving the A2 and providing good access to major new employment areas at Frindsbury Peninsula (Medway City Estate) and Chatham Maritime (the former Naval Dockyard). It is considered extremely important to the economic future of the Medway Towns although the cost of the scheme is very high, especially the tunnel. This part of the scheme is being promoted by the Rochester Bridge Trust, with contributions



from the County and District Councils and English Estates. A Bill was placed before Parliament in November 1988, and it is anticipated that construction will start in 1990 and the scheme be completed in 1993. It is also hoped that the Wainscott Northern By-pass and Gillingham Northern Link can be completed to approximately the same timescale using the normal Highways Act powers. However, this will be dependent on substantial amounts of finance being obtained from the private sector in respect of sites allocated in the Local Plan. If contributions are not obtained these schemes are unlikely to be completed until the late 1990's.

### **Rail**

- 6.07 The Medway Towns are well served by rail links from London to the stations at Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Rainham. Fast trains to London take 40 minutes. Stopping services to Victoria run twice an hour and additionally there are services from Chatham and Gillingham to Charing Cross. There are services to the coast (Ramsgate and Dover) and the Mid Kent line links Strood with Maidstone and Paddock Wood. The North Kent line connects London via Gravesend and Dartford. There is currently a small annual growth in commuting to London and peak hour traffic is growing to the extent that car parking facilities at Chatham Station have been expanded by 125 spaces. Improvements are also planned for Gillingham and Rainham. British Rail has announced plans to upgrade its rolling stock in the region but this will not significantly increase capacity. Further improvements to the rail network will largely depend on the progress of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and the associated Mid-Kent Parkway station with its proposed location immediately to the south of the Local Plan Area. However, this major project remains subject to parliamentary approval and its potential effects are still being assessed.

### **Buses and Coaches**

- 6.08 Buses are an important means of transport for people travelling to work, shopping or other trips. About 34% of households in the Medway Towns do not have the use of a car. As well as linking the Medway Towns to Gravesend, Maidstone, Sittingbourne and other nearby settlements, bus services operate from the principal Medway Towns centres to the outer suburbs and estates. Traffic congestion on many approach roads to the main centres means that bus journeys from outlying suburbs can be lengthy and services unreliable.
- 6.09 The deregulation of bus services has meant that new operators have taken over some of the existing routes of the major operator, the Maidstone and District Bus Company, which has now concentrated its services on specific corridors and is generally providing a higher frequency of service on these routes. Most services now terminate at the Chatham Pentagon Shopping Centre or in its general vicinity.
- 6.10 In common with other areas of Kent there has been a rapid growth of commuter coach services to London. One of the attractions of these services is the ability to offer a door-to-door service and most journeys penetrate the major housing estates within the Local Plan Area. However this has led to on-street parking in certain residential areas.

### **River and Sea**

- 6.11 The Medway is a working river which is a valuable asset to the area although its commercial use has declined in recent decades. The traditional manufacturing industries (paper and cement) were located close to the river and used it for transporting bulk cargoes. There are several wharves at Rochester involved with the importation of bulky cargoes but because of competition from more modern docks, better able to handle manufactured and unitised goods, and the shortage of space in some cases, the future of these is uncertain.

- 6.12 At the beginning of 1984, the Medway (Chatham) Dock Company opened facilities at Basin 3 of the former Royal Naval Base where four shipping companies are now operating from eight berths. This involves a modern container and forest products terminal with daily ro-ro freight lorry services to Zeebrugge. It is a thriving dock with good prospects for growth. However, further expansion will be dependent upon the completion of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road. Planning permission has also been given for a deep-sea shipping container port on the Isle of Grain. The first ship was due to dock in 1990 and shipments will build-up gradually over the following two years. The traffic generated will increase the need for completion of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road and improvements to the A228.

#### **Air**

- 6.13 The Medway Towns have good road links with the South East Region's airports, (e.g. Gatwick and Heathrow). Rochester Airfield is situated approximately four miles south of Rochester town centre, between the M2 and the A229. It has two grass runways of approximately 850m in length which restricts the type of aircraft that can use the airfield. The airfield's use is confined to instrument testing, business and recreational flying.

#### **Car Parking**

- 6.14 Car parking, especially in Chatham, Gillingham and Rochester will not be adequate to cope with the predicted increase in traffic. Unless this and other environmental problems are solved, Chatham's function as a major retailing centre will suffer, especially if there is competition from a freestanding regional shopping centre, for example at Blue Water Park, Dartford and other edge or out-of-town retail warehouse developments. Rochester will not be able to reap the full benefits of tourism unless coach and car parking facilities are improved. Gillingham Town Centre will continue to become a more localised retail centre unless additional accessible car parking comparable to the convenience of the Balmoral car park is provided. Lorry parking provision also needs to be enhanced and appropriate sites close to principal employment areas need to be identified. With the identification of such a site(s) and the completion of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road the current ban on on-street overnight lorry parking should be extended from just the Gillingham Borough Area, to the rest of the Local Plan Area.

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **Central Government Guidance**

- 6.15 The Government's objectives for road building are to assist economic growth, to improve the environment by removing through traffic from towns and villages, and to enhance road safety (Policy for Roads in England: 1987 Command 125). Government wishes to encourage private sector initiatives for transport infrastructure where this represents a most cost effective approach. The White Paper "Roads for Prosperity" (CM693) heralds a greatly enhanced motorway and trunk road programme to relieve congestion on major roads. The new programme gives even higher priority to meeting the needs of industry and other road users.

#### **Regional Guidance**

- 6.16 The only regional transport guidance given by Government relates to the M25, and is set out in the Secretary of State's letter of 23rd March 1984. The completion of the M25 was seen to be a means of helping to reinforce the established land use planning policies for London and the South East and benefiting the economy of London and the region as a whole, particularly if the opportunities presented by its completion can help to redress the balance of attraction for development between the east and west of the region.

6.17 SERPLAN published a Regional Transport Statement in October 1988. This concludes that there should be:

- (a) greater policy co-ordination between different modes of transport, transport and land-use planning, and other investment criteria;
- (b) recognition of Regional Strategic Guidance in transport policies and investment programmes;
- (c) recognition of the importance of the South East's economy to the national economy and the part transport can play;
- (d) a mix of policies, modes and investments for different parts of the region.

The statement also highlights the need for investment in transport infrastructure to unlock the development potential of the East Thames Corridor which includes the Medway Towns. The Medway Towns Northern Relief Road is listed as one of the major projects required to overcome problems of access and dereliction in the Corridor.

#### **Structure Plan Policies**

6.18 The Kent Structure Plan sets out the strategic policies for transport in the County and these are reproduced in Appendix 1. The policies relate to economic activity development, planning and protection of the environment. Policy T4 states that traffic management measures and road improvements will be carried out to reduce congestion and will also be used to protect the environment (Policy T12). Policy T9 seeks to ensure the establishment of suitably located facilities to meet the needs of road users.

6.19 A positive attitude is taken to helping developers solve access difficulties to sites (Policy T3) and advice will be given on how to overcome likely traffic problems (Policy T5). Under Policy T8, before proposals for new developments are permitted, the Local Planning Authorities will need to be satisfied that highway improvements, arising wholly or substantially from the development in question, are or will be provided.

6.20 The growth of cross Channel traffic at Chatham Port (Policy P9) will be supported subject to the completion of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road. Expansion of port traffic at wharves in Rochester is also supported (Policy P10). The development of new ports and wharves on sites outside the urban area will be resisted (Policy P11). The provision of rail freight depots will also be supported where they reduce transport costs and give environmental benefits.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

6.21 It is important for the Local Plan to identify the appropriate highway network onto which the movement of people and goods will be channelled. This will allow the best use to be made of existing roads and indicate priorities for expenditure on improvements and maintenance. In determining planning applications the Local Planning Authorities will need to have regard to the capacity of the highway network to the immediate impact of proposed developments upon highway safety. It will be the further objectives of the Local Planning Authorities

- a) to promote new and improved transport links to facilitate economic development;
- b) to ensure that the scale and design of road and junction improvements take account of the character and environment of the area and that traffic hazards are reduced;

- c) to support improvements to public transport facilities and to ensure that a reasonable level of service is maintained;
- d) to ensure that adequate car parking facilities are provided with new developments and to seek an appropriate amount and distribution of accessible car parking facilities at principal town centres and commercial areas;
- e) to promote improvements to pedestrian routes wherever possible.

## **POLICIES AND REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

### **Impact of New Development on the Highway Network**

6.22

The Structure Plan identifies a hierarchy for inter-urban roads throughout the County but this classification does not refer to the functions of the roads within urban areas. In order to provide an adequate framework within which to consider development proposals, all roads in the urban area of the Plan have been categorised according to their function as follows (as shown on Diagram 1 in the appendices):

- (a) **primary distributors** form the primary network for the urban area as a whole and carry all longer distance traffic to, from and within the towns;
- (b) **district distributors** carry traffic from primary distributors to the residential, industrial and business districts of the Towns and distribute traffic between the districts;
- (c) **local distributors** carry traffic within the residential, industrial, business districts and environmental areas (that is, areas free from non-essential traffic in which considerations of environment predominate over the use of vehicles). They form the link between district distributors and access roads.

All other roads are classified as Access Roads, giving direct access to buildings and land, and are not specifically identified on Diagram 1.

6.23

The effective operation of the highway network could be adversely affected by new development being inappropriately sited in relation to the distributor network or generating traffic flows beyond the capacity of the road network.

**Policy T1** There will be a presumption against proposals for development which:

- i) Are not appropriately related to the highway network; or
- ii) Generate volumes of traffic in excess of the capacity of the highway network.

**This Policy will be applied in conjunction with Policy T2**

### **Access to the Highway Network**

6.24

In urban areas, turning movements account for a significant proportion of accidents, whereas on major routes in rural areas speed becomes the most significant factor. The construction of a sub-standard access onto the main highway network could create a potential hazard by increasing the number of turning movements on urban roads and by creating additional obstructions on the rural road network. A new access will only be accepted where adequate visibility can be provided.

**Policy T2** There will be a presumption against the formation of a new access or the intensification of use of an existing access onto primary, district and local distributors, except where a new access can be created in a location which is acceptable to the Local Planning and Highway Authorities or where an existing access can be improved to a standard, which is acceptable to the Local Planning and Highway Authorities.

6.25 In certain circumstances, development which would otherwise be acceptable cannot be permitted due to difficulties with the local road network. Sometimes these problems can be overcome if the developer is prepared to enter into an agreement to pay for an improvement or contribute towards the cost of bringing an improvement forward in the highway programme.

**Policy T3** When an otherwise acceptable development proposal would create unacceptable highway problems, the Local Planning or the Highway Authority will be prepared to enter into agreements with developers for the construction and/or funding of necessary and appropriate highway improvements.

### New Roads

6.26 This section deals with new roads which are programmed for construction in the Plan period. It must be stressed that the achievement of this programme depends upon Government allocating sufficient capital resources to Kent, and so to some extent is outside the control of Kent County Council as Highway Authority. There are nine proposals for major new road schemes programmed for construction during the Local Plan period or whose routes need safeguarding. These are

a) A231 Chatham Ring Road Phase 3a and 3b

Following the dualling of the A2 New Road, construction of the remainder of the town centre ring road is urgently needed to improve access to the central commercial area and to facilitate access to Chatham Maritime.

b) A231 Gillingham Town Centre Relief Road, Arden Street to Mill Road

This second phase of the relief road scheme is to remove the conflict between vehicles and pedestrians in the western part of the High Street. The first phase at the eastern end of the High Street was completed in 1979. This phase is programmed to commence in the early 1990's.

c) A2 Strood Ring Road

Congestion is severe in central Strood where the A228 and A2 cross by means of a gyratory system using the main shopping streets. The ring road is proposed to reduce delays and relieve the disruptive effect of traffic in the town centre. The priority of the scheme is being re-assessed given that traffic flows will be reduced by the construction of the M.T.N.R.R. However, it is likely to warrant programming for construction in the mid-1990's.

d) Medway Towns Southern Peripheral Road and North Dane Way

A high standard distributor road network has been an essential element of the Walderslade, Lordswood and Hempstead development areas. The completion of this network requires the construction of the final stage of the Medway Towns Southern Peripheral Road and its connection to North Dane Way. The works include the dualling of Sharsted Way outside the Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre and between the Bridgewood and proposed Fostington Way roundabouts. In addition to its function as a primary distributor road, the route will take traffic from unsuitable country lanes, provide some relief to the

overloaded M2, act as a bypass to Bredhurst Village and remove through traffic from the Lordswood residential area. It is unlikely that a start will be made before late 1990 and the scheme will be phased over several years.

e) A228 Frindsbury Road, Strood

The Strood Ring Road scheme includes the widening of Frindsbury Road to the south of its junction with Station Road. To resolve capacity and safety problems, the widening of Frindsbury Road to the north of this junction is proposed. The timing will become dependent upon the progress of development proposed at Frindsbury and Wainscott and may also need to be reviewed in the light of traffic relieved by the Wainscott Northern Bypass proposal.

f) Medway Towns Northern Relief Road

Many of the traffic problems of the Medway Towns result from there being only one crossing point of the River Medway in the urban area at Rochester Bridge. A major proposal in this Plan is the construction of a Northern Relief Road for the Medway Towns incorporating a new Medway Crossing between the Frindsbury Peninsula and the former Chatham Royal Naval Base now being redeveloped as Chatham Maritime. Together with a Northern Bypass for Wainscott and a Northern Link for Gillingham this new crossing could provide a northern distributor road for the Medway Towns, relieving the A2 and improving highway safety. A further benefit will be a reduction in the adverse environmental impact of heavy lorries. There is currently no suitable link between the Dockyard and M2 or Frindsbury Peninsula and M2 for heavy goods vehicles and there is a tendency for them to use residential roads in Gillingham and Strood respectively which are most unsuitable. The Gillingham Northern Link and Wainscott Northern Bypass will greatly alleviate this. As well as traffic and environmental benefits the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road will provide improved access to industrial areas in the north of the Local Plan Area (Frindsbury Peninsula, Chatham Maritime, Chatham Docks) helping to revitalise the area and create new jobs. The Wainscott Northern Bypass in particular will enable new sites to be developed which were previously inaccessible, whilst enabling progress on other sites which have been prevented from proceeding with development (e.g. Kingsnorth and Isle of Grain) because of the congested road system.

The Proposals Map shows the route of the three sections as follows:

i) Wainscott Northern Bypass

This will start at the A2/M2/Three Crutches interchange and finish at the A228/Four Elms roundabout at the northern end of the Wainscott Eastern Bypass. It will effectively bypass the existing A289 Hollywood Lane/Brompton Farm Road/Rede Court Road route. A new junction will be constructed at the Three Crutches to allow traffic to turn in both directions onto, and off, the M2. The existing route is mostly flanked by residential property and hence there will be environmental advantages in the provision of a by-pass as well as removing traffic from passing through Central Strood from the Hoo Peninsula.

ii) Medway Crossing (Tunnel)

From Anthony's Way, south of its junction with Upnor Road, the approach road will cross the western end of Whitehall Creek on an embankment, descend beneath the river and emerge into a cutting on the east bank at a new grade separated junction on Pembroke Road. The eastern approach is then continued to a new roundabout on the B2004 Medway Road, near the entrance to Chatham Docks.

iii) **Gillingham Northern Link**

From the entrance to Chatham Docks the existing B2004 (Medway Road and Pier Road) will be upgraded by widening on the northern (river) side of the road. To the east of Woodlands Road the route swings southwards, passing underneath the railway and across the eastern side of the Golf Course, to join with the recently completed roundabout on the A2 Watling Street.

The completion of the whole of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road will depend upon sufficient public sector funds being made available and contributions being forthcoming from developments identified in Policies H3, R4 and L15. It is currently anticipated that a start on the construction of the Medway Tunnel will be made in 1990/91. Both the Highway Authority and the District Councils are committed to the early implementation of the other two elements of the project, ideally on a similar timescale to the Tunnel, which is due to open in 1993.

g) **Rainham Southern Relief Road**

In Rainham, traffic between the town centre, the commercial areas to the north and the residential areas to the south conflicts with east-west movements on the A2. This results in congestion, accidents and poor environmental standards. By removing A2 traffic flow, the Southern Relief Road will provide a bypass to the south of the town centre and remove through traffic from the shopping area. There has been an approved scheme for several years and the current alignment is shown on the Proposals Map.

h) **M2 Widening**

The Department of Transport plans post 1991 to widen the M2 to three lanes in each direction between Junctions 1 and 4.

i) **A229 Improvements to Bridgewood Roundabout**

An interim scheme involving the installation of peak hour traffic signals has recently been approved pending the construction of a flyover in 1993 to relieve this heavily congested area. The Local Planning Authorities would seek to achieve the construction of the flyover by the earliest possible opportunity and 1993 at the latest on the basis of the traffic congestion in the area. In view of the close proximity of this roundabout to the M2 Motorway, which itself is to be improved, it will be important that the design of these improvement schemes be co-ordinated to optimise the safe and free flow of traffic and minimise environmental impact.

In addition there are six road schemes which it is intended to carry out within the period of the Local Plan. However although the start dates for these are provisionally programmed within the Plan period some of the schemes have yet to be designed and others will have their timing reviewed in the light of the progress of development and the rate of increase of traffic in the area. These schemes are:-

- a) A228 Windmill Hill
- b) A228 Bells Lane
- c) A228 Middle Stoke
- d) Princes Avenue/Walderslade Road
- e) Capstone Road/North Dane Way
- f) A231 Gillingham Town Centre Relief Road: Victoria Street to Station Road.

**Policy T4** It is expected that the following road proposals shown on the Proposals Map will be implemented within the Plan period. Development which would prejudice the implementation of these schemes will be resisted.

- i) A231 Chatham Ring Road Phase 3A and 3B
- ii) Princes Avenue/Walderslade Road
- iii) Capstone Road/North Dane Way
- iv) A2 Strood Ring Road
- v) Medway Towns Southern Peripheral Road
  - a) Fostington Way Roundabout
  - b) Dualling between Bridgewood Roundabout and Fostington Way
  - c) Sharsted Way Dualling
  - d) Stage 4 and North Dane Way
- vi) A228 Frindsbury Road, Strood
- vii) Medway Towns Northern Relief Road
  - a) Wainscott Northern Bypass
  - b) Medway Crossing (Tunnel)
  - c) Gillingham Northern Link
- viii) Rainham Southern Relief Road
- ix) M2 Widening Junctions 1 to 4
- x) A228 Windmill Hill
- xi) A228 Bells Lane Junction
- xii) A228 Middle Stoke
- xiii) A231 Gillingham Town Centre Relief Road: Victoria Street to Station Road. Arden Street to Mill Road.

#### **Traffic Management**

6.27

In view of the general pressures on the highway network it is important that available space is used to maximum capacity. Traffic management measures aim to make the best use of existing highway infrastructure and have three main purposes:

- a) to improve the road network's traffic capacity using measures such as one way systems and linking traffic lights along a stretch of road
- b) to improve safety through such means as vehicular-pedestrian segregation and weight and width restrictions; and
- c) to help improve the environment by discouraging through traffic from residential areas or excluding unsuitable heavy traffic.

The construction of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road should provide an opportunity to introduce traffic management measures on the routes that are relieved of through traffic. The implementation of the Chatham Ring Road has enabled pedestrianisation of the High Street and similar improvements may be made when the Strood Ring Road is completed.



**Policy T5** Traffic management measures and road improvements will be carried out where they are a cost effective way of reducing congestion, improving the environment, or improving road safety.

**Policy T6** Traffic regulation orders will be made where practicable to prohibit or restrict the use of heavy goods vehicles or through traffic in sensitive environmental areas or on such roads where it is considered desirable to conserve or improve local amenities.

### **Public Transport**

- 6.28 Public transport will always be important for people who do not have access to a car, and whilst the Local Planning Authorities do not have any direct control over the provision of public transport facilities, they can make every effort to liaise with the relevant agencies to encourage appropriate levels of provision of public transport.
- 6.29 The bus services in the Medway Towns have been arranged to link the main centres of the Local Plan Area with outlying estates. In recent years the rationalisation of services has meant some reduction in the frequency of services and more recently (at October 1986) deregulation of public transport provision has meant that there has been a concentration of services along main routes, but with a higher frequency. Kent County Council has sought limited replacement (by tender) of some services to areas no longer enjoying a nearby service. Most services now terminate at Chatham Pentagon to minimise problems with traffic congestion although this does still impair the reliability of services. As already mentioned, one area of rapid growth in public transport however, has been the development of commuter coaches to London. The rail network has also enjoyed a small annual increase in commuting to London from the Local Plan Area, despite poor records in respect of punctuality and overcrowding on the North Kent line. There are plans to replace the rolling stock on this line with new more reliable and higher capacity trains starting in the Autumn of 1991.

**Policy T7** The Local Planning Authorities will seek to ensure that the needs of public transport services and facilities are fully taken into account in new development proposals and will promote a closer co-ordination and integration within the overall transport network.

### **Car Parking**

- 6.30 The provision of satisfactory parking facilities in town centres is vital if these centres are to function efficiently and attract shoppers, thus competing on an equal footing with new out-of-town centres. Recent research indicates that whilst there were sufficient spaces in the town centres, this did not take into account peak demand on Saturdays and there is now a deficiency in both the quantity and quality of parking provision within the towns. Long term parking is a problem in Rainham due to the high demand for commuter parking near the railway station. Outside town centre areas, long term parking is a major cause of concern where it conflicts with traditional on-street parking, particularly on some of the major highway routes resulting in a considerable reduction in traffic capacity.
- 6.31 Future demand for car parking within town centres will be affected by three factors, namely the growth in the housing stock, growth in car ownership (with two or more cars per household becoming increasingly common) and thirdly, with land use changes that add to parking requirements. These facts mean it is essential that existing car parks are managed as efficiently as possible. This can be achieved through an appropriate charging policy. Due to controls on capital expenditure it will be difficult for local authorities to fund new car parks. It is therefore important that the private sector plays a part through the provision of new facilities in conjunction with new developments.

**Policy T8** The provision of public on-street and public off-street car parking spaces will be controlled whenever possible to ensure that the number and intensity of their use is compatible with the capacity of the highway network.

**Policy T9** Long stay car parking will be discouraged from town centre car parks close to main shopping areas to the benefit of short term car parking. Due regard will, however, be paid to the needs, where appropriate, of park-and-ride travellers.

**Policy T10** Restrictions will be introduced to limit parking by non residents in residential streets where a serious parking problem is identified.

6.32 It can sometimes be more efficient for car parking spaces to be provided in publicly available and controlled car parks rather than split between a number of private developments. This can be achieved by the use of commuted payments by the developer to the local authority, who then provide new car parks in appropriate locations.

**Policy T11** Developers of sites in town centres and their environs will be encouraged to enter into appropriate agreements with District Planning Authorities for the provision of their non operational parking in publicly controlled car parks.

6.33 A particular need for additional car parking provision has been identified at Rainham Town Centre and a site for additional public car parking has been identified on the south side of the High Street.

**Policy T12** The provision of additional car parking facilities will be pursued at the site to the rear of The Cricketers Public House, Rainham, as illustrated on the Proposals Map.

6.34 It is important that sufficient car parking should be provided to meet the requirements of any new development. This is important in order to prevent an increase in on-street parking which is a serious problem within the Medway Towns and also to deflect the increase in demand for existing public car parks, especially those within town centres which are often close to capacity. Ease of car parking is often an important factor in the decision of the individual in which centre or facility to use. Developments with an ample level of parking provision are much more attractive to users. However, the Local Planning Authorities are aware that strict application of the Kent County Council vehicle parking standards, could prejudice the change of use of existing buildings or minor extensions and lead to buildings falling vacant and into disrepair. Consequently, consideration may be given to relaxing the standards where they would prejudice townscape or other objectives of this Plan.

**Policy T13** The Local Planning Authorities will expect all proposals for new development to make provision for vehicle parking in accordance with the Vehicle Parking Standards set out in Appendix 4 unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances that justify a reduction in this standard. Proposals which will result in a loss of off street parking would normally be refused unless the existing provision can be replaced elsewhere within the development together with the parking required for the development itself.

6.35 In order that access to all developments can be gained easily by disabled people it is necessary to provide dedicated parking spaces for disabled persons parking. These need to be in a convenient location which require no change of level to reach the entrance to the development. Parking spaces for disabled people need to be larger than normal in order to allow ease of entering and leaving their means of transport.

**Policy T14** Vehicle parking provided in accordance with Policy T13 shall include an appropriate number of disabled persons parking spaces. These spaces shall be located close to the main pedestrian access of the development and be clearly marked for disabled persons use only. The size of these spaces will be in accordance with the Vehicle Parking Standards set out in Appendix 4.

### **Pedestrians**

6.36 It is important that new developments relate well to all pedestrians routes and do not produce inhuman or hostile environments which discourage the use of such routes. Some developments will provide the opportunity for designing new pedestrian routes. These should be attractively designed and incorporate 'soft' landscaping where this is appropriate.

6.37 Access for disabled people is a material consideration in determining a planning application. Access for the disabled does not just concern itself with access to buildings but access to all developments and as such the design and construction of all pedestrians routes is an important consideration.

**Policy T15** All new development shall wherever possible enhance and improve existing pedestrian routes. New pedestrian routes should relate closely to desire lines and be designed to provide an attractive pedestrian environment. Proposals will normally be refused unless the associated pedestrian routes are accessible to disabled members of the public.

6.38 A number of improvements to the pedestrian environment have already been undertaken in the Plan Area. Most notably these are the pedestrianisation of Rochester, Gillingham and Chatham High Streets and Military Road/Railway Street, Chatham which have improved pedestrian movements and provided a more attractive traffic free environment for retailers. Subject to adequate resources being available, the Local Planning Authorities intend to carry out further improvements:-

**Policy T16** Consideration shall be given to improving conditions for the pedestrian in the following areas:-

- i) High Street, Strood
- ii) Watling Street, Rainham
- iii) High Street, Canterbury Street, Arden Street, Gillingham

### **Cycle Parking**

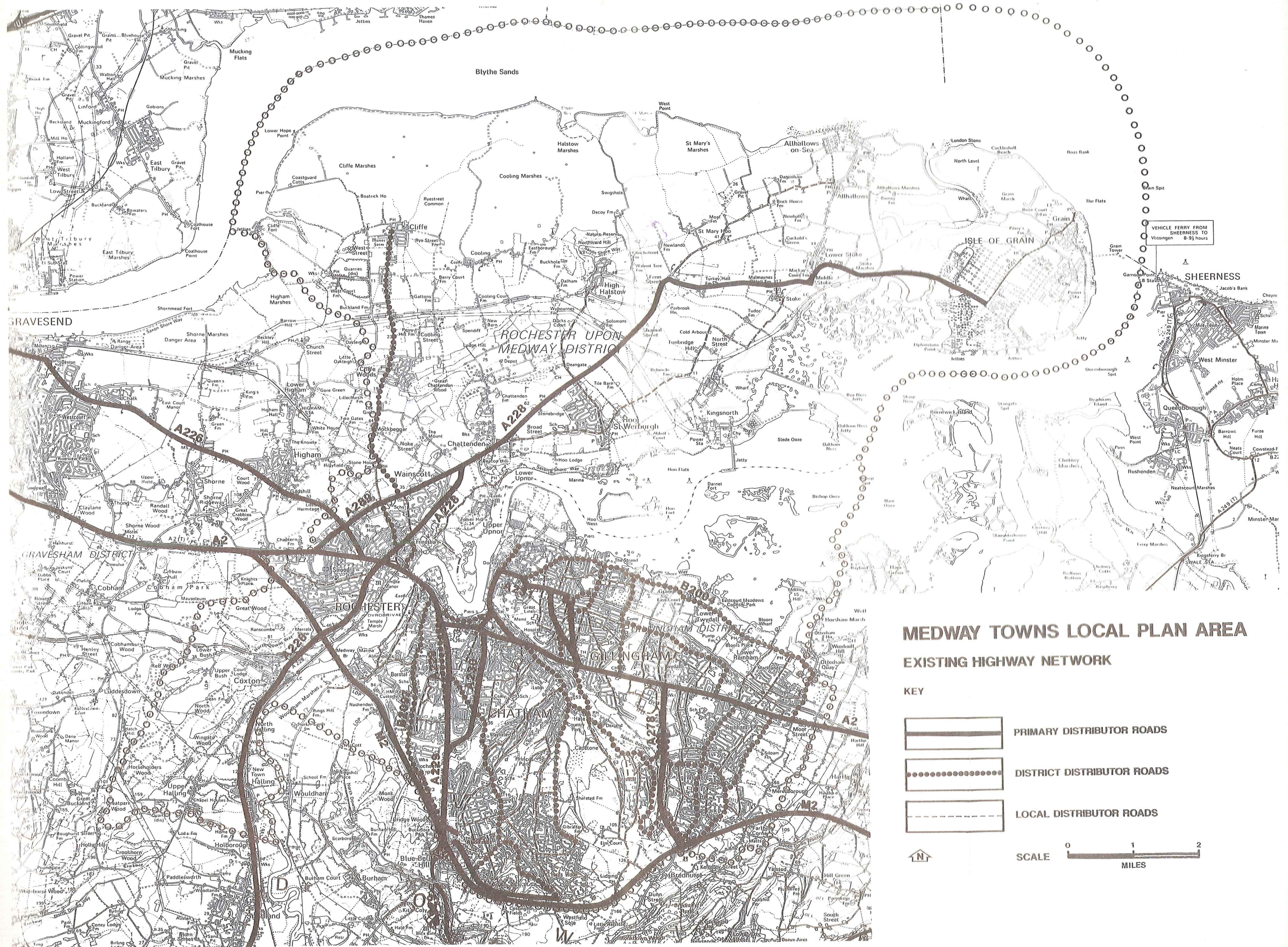
6.39 Cycling can be both a recreational pursuit and a mode of transport. The promotion of cycling both on health and traffic grounds has been supported in recent Central Government bulletins. The main requirements are the provision of facilities for the parking of cycles, especially in town centres, at leisure facilities and at places of work.

**Policy T17** The Local Planning Authorities will encourage the use of cycles by ensuring that major new developments provide suitable access and parking areas for cycles.

## **APPENDIX 3**




**PUBLICATION DRAFT FOR THE MEDWAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
REPRESENTATIONS OF MICHAEL DAKERS LMRTPI**


**MEDWAY TOWN LOCAL PLAN AREA EXISTING HIGHWAY NETWORK PLAN  
FROM 1992 PLAN**



**MEDWAY TOWNS LOCAL PLAN AREA  
EXISTING HIGHWAY NETWORK**

**KEY**

-  PRIMARY DISTRIBUTOR ROADS
-  DISTRICT DISTRIBUTOR ROADS
-  LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR ROADS

**SCALE**  0 1 2  
MILES

VEHICLE FERRY FROM  
SHEERNESS TO  
Vissingen 8-9 1/2 hours

**SHEERNESS**

**ISLE OF GRAIN**

**ROCHESTER UPON  
MEDWAY DISTRICT**

**GRAVESEND**

**GRAVESEND DISTRICT**

**ROCHESTER**

**BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT**

**CHATHAM**

**A2**

**M2**

**A226**

**A228**

**A226**

**A228**

**B2007**

**A2**

**M2**

**A249 (T)**

**A249 (T)**

**A249 (T)**

**A249 (T)**

**A249 (T)**

**A249 (T)**

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## **APPENDIX 4**

### **PUBLICATION DRAFT FOR THE MEDWAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK REPRESENTATIONS OF MICHAEL DAKERS LMRTPI**

#### **MICHAEL DAKERS FULL COMMENTS ON THE STROOD MASTERPLAN**

**COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS BY MICHAEL GILL LIMITED  
(MICHAEL DAKERS AND GILLIAN DALTON) CONCERNING THE STROOD  
MASTER PLAN AS SET OUT IN THE SUMMARY LEAFLET DATED  
OCTOBER 2009.**

**Date: December 2009.**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 These are observations of Michael Gill Limited, ("MGL") one of the stakeholders of the Council in this respect and developer of the site providing 4/5 retail units and first floor offices above on the corner of Tolgate Lane and the Commercial Road car park. This is in the centre of the site identified as (9) on the Master Plan.
- 1.2 MGL concur with the view that the regeneration of Strood town centre is a priority and is essential to the future success of Medway. The comments are made without having seen the detail of the Master Plan that has been provided by the consultants employed by Medway Council and it is requested that such detail be available to MGL for comment. Insofar however as detail can be provided, some comments are set out below in relation to each site identified on the Plan to the Master Plan that has so far been provided which it is asked that those promulgating the Master Plan should take into account. MGL would like to discuss these issues with any consultants or other advisers being appointed by Medway Council to help draft the plan in a fuller form.
- 1.3 It is understood that although formal consultation with the public may have occurred in the latter part of 2009, such consultation as is appropriate with stakeholders continues and that is why this is being written. Please confirm that that is the case and how the consultation with stakeholders will continue to take place.
- 1.4 What must not be missed and is mentioned at the end of these notes, but needs to be flagged up now, is the essential fact that the regeneration of Strood will depend entirely upon re-designing its road configuration so that the retail centre and its adjuncts can be made user friendly without having to cope with traffic. There are plans that have been in existence since the 1970's and included in successive development plans since part of it was started by the creation of Commercial Road, Strood, in the 1960's. That would allow it to be extended through direct to the Gun Lane/London Road/Cuxton Road junction beyond which there has already been part provision of the roadways beyond that in that the dual carriageway, which commences approximately 100 yards beyond the London Road railway bridge leading up to Watling Street has already been constructed and was done so many years ago. This was also reflected by property acquisitions along London Road to enable the construction of the rest of the dual carriageway down to the Bridge

## **2. Employment development**

- 2.1 The proposal for new employment development on site numbered (1) on the Master Plan is presumably related to the fact that this is intended to be some sort of retail park, as explained by the planning permission that has already been obtained by Helvig Limited. The idea of stand-alone units, whether distribution or retail, to support those that are already in existence in the retail park, where B & Q is situated, seems appropriate, although whether or not this should be regarded as an extension on the edge of centre to the B & Q retail park, itself an adjunct and complementary (hopefully) to the Strood High Street, is not clearly stated in your Plan. This however would be good for Strood if it provided the larger additional stores such as Harveys, Dreams, etc, to complement the non-convenience food outlets. There are already quite a number of these at the Gillingham Business Park, itself quite a distance and effectively at the other end of the Medway Towns from Strood. Thus trying to emulate that in a similar position at Strood, itself across the river from the rest of the Medway Towns, would seem to provide a sensible balance of provision of this sort of outlet. This would also make such provision reasonably accessible to all those on the west side of the Medway, including the large Hoo peninsula and the villages between Strood and Gravesend, and in Cuxton and Halling and beyond (and perhaps even Gravesend itself) who are not at present served by anything of that nature.
- 2.2 If one is considering employment provision in terms of units for small manufacture craft or semi retail etc, that may be more appropriate, than the proposed residential development at site (8) on the Master Plan. The residential aspect will be dealt with later but the site, which is close to the town centre on its western side, backing on to the railway line, certainly seems to be an area where small units and employment provision of that sort of nature would be appropriate. It is reasonably accessible to the town centre, although not within it because of the intrusion of the railway line.
- 2.3 With regard to the potential for Tesco expansion, that is clearly reasonable to provide for but the essential provision of a re-aligned store of a better size for Tesco should not outweigh the need to reserve the appropriate land for any road improvements which are the priority for Strood if it is to be effectively regenerated as stated above (para 1.4). Certainly, Tesco needs better parking and the area identified at site (2) could generally be better utilised for that purpose.
- 2.4 It is not clear from the notes that MGL have been supplied with what the rationale of the proposals are for site number (5). Subject to not interfering with the road plans which drive through some of the properties on the south side (near to the London Road/Gun Lane crossroads off Cuxton Road) the present BT petrol filling station will also be the subject of any road proposals. Otherwise this site could be redeveloped, if it was thought necessary, but it is already an employment site. The type of uses that are there are not necessarily inimical to what should be there, albeit that the car body repair and finishing sites are probably not appropriate in close proximity to retail shopping.
- 2.5 The Master Plan appears to show this area site (5) as housing but that is not appropriate. The areas coloured with the sand colouring are in fact already employment sites and it is our view that they should remain as such. Housing in



such close proximity to the railway line will repeat the problems that have already been evident in the housing so far provided at site (7).

- 2.6 So far as site (12) is concerned, it is to be noted that this is already an existing employment area in which a substantial employer (R. Swain & Sons Limited) continues to operate successfully. Is the proposal one seeking to remove that Company, bearing in mind that they had already been compulsorily moved in the late 1990's from Rochester Riverside? The area that appears to be identified for the business park is their existing car park, which is essential to the operation of their business. Other than that, the allocation of an employment use there, as it already exists, would be appropriate but the business park area as such is more than adequately provided near to where site (4) is identified on the Plan.
- 2.7 One of the concerns that MGL has is that the Government appointed Inspector, appointed to hold a Public Inquiry into the first attempt that Medway Council made in relation to a Local Development Framework (in response to the 2002/2004 legislation), made it clear that he could not continue with the Inquiry because there was too much emphasis on housing in the Medway Plan proposed. Insofar as The Master Plan provides for some employment, it is appropriate that these employment sites should be identified but that is why MGL comment that the residential proposals (in part) that are contained in the Master Plan are too much and should be converted to some sort of employment. This should include the part of site (7) which is commonly known as the Strood Dock Terminal area and lies beyond the road narrowing at Commissioners Road. It is more appropriate to be included as an employment area with the rest of the Medway City Estate to which it abuts rather than to be included as a residential area, from which it is part separated by a wall, footpath and water.

### **3. Residential Proposals**

- 3.1 Harking back to the comments made at paragraph 2.7, the residential proposals insofar as they extend from site (7) up to the end of Canal Road and adjacent to the residential area of Commissioners Road seem appropriate but that is where the residential development on that side (north) of the railway lines should cease. As stated in the previous paragraph, the area of Strood Dock Terminal is really more appropriate as an employment area and would fit neatly in as an extension to the Medway City Estate. Site (11) Rochester Riverside has already been earmarked and prepared for development. Although it is a mixed development, it is predominately residential; that should suffice for taking away employment areas and redefining them generally as residential development. Whatever the Thames Gateway Regional Plan may say, such development is not one that should be followed throughout every part of the river frontage but should reflect what is appropriate bearing in mind the need to provide employment as well. Part of site (7) has of course already been developed for housing and the lessons to be learnt from having housing so close to the railway line should be a constant reminder of what to avoid.
- 3.2 The problem at site (8) for residential development is that it is really not appropriate for that purpose. It is an area cut off from Strood centre but still near enough to it where there really can be a useful provision of employment, close to

the railway station but also not taking away from the High Street unnecessarily, enhancing it. Small units, some of them perhaps craft units and the like, should be what is provided there and a public place, which should not seek to take over the role of a central square from Angel Corner but could take advantage of the fact that the Aveling and Porter building needs to be retained and can provide a backdrop to a nicely landscaped garden and promenade for the public on the riverside facing the Castle, the Cathedral and old Rochester. Thus part of this would be more appropriate for employment but of a small scale and which could be allied to the centre retail and other facilities. But, please, bear in mind the road proposals that are referred to later on as provision must be left for that to be carried out there both for the immediate future and for the long term future of Strood.

- 3.3 In relation to site (6) and the general residential requirement, MGL, notes from your Core Issues Statement and Appendices published for consideration that several options have been set out for providing residential requirements up to the year 2016. According to that document, if you take up the Chattenden site proposal you have enough housing for the period up to that date without any further allocation. You also have sufficient housing next to the river in sites (11) and (7), although at (11) all that has been done is the raising of the land so far. That leaves site (6) as a potential site for further housing beside the river or near to it after 2016. But other needs of the towns also ought to be considered and whether there should be some reservation in this area for parking generally (see below).
- 3.4 The most under used highway in the Medway Towns is the river itself. Although attempts have been made to provide cross river ferries, no attempt has really been made to provide a ferry service from a car park accessed straight off the motorway or from a road starting in the High Street effectively through the removed the modern part of the Civic Centre. This latter would continue on the eastern side of the Medway Valley railway line to enable connection direct to the M2 through the road leading to Saxon Way (at which the roundabout at the foot of the slope nearest the river already provides a spur). Provided that this is made available, providing a carpark, which could include coach parking, at Temple Marshes, would constitute an interesting tourist attraction. Consider the delight of boarding a boat at Temple Marshes to travel down past the Castle (landing stage) and the Cathedral (Blue Boar pier) through Rochester to Sun Pier (for Chatham), the Historic Dockyard (Commissioners House), Upnor Castle, St. Mary's Island (2Ship and Trades" area and for the Outlet Centre) and then onwards. The route could start at the other end at the Strand at Gillingham and also call at Hoo, (Vicarage Lane), Gillingham pier, and Strood pier, as well as the other touristy stops. Surely this is feasible, even if it has to be supported by Medway Council, but could also provide an alternative public transport system for locals as well with car parks in appropriate places - hence the proposal for Temple Marshes. We do not think that this would be too costly as it would result in savings elsewhere.
- 3.5 This would be a different style of approach from other major tourist centres and might give a fillip to the Medway area as a tourist attraction, whilst keeping coaches and tourist traffic to a minimum in Rochester, Chatham town centre and other such places. Medway is a classic highway problem of a spine road and a river winding round it separating the various settlements. It is cited in one of the original Town Planning reference books as an example not to follow for traffic

highway planning. There are only two crossings of the river and too many rat runs and other problems with the highway system. Development that would prevent this would be silly. It is also to be taken into account that Area (8) is next door to a railway line, so the impact of the noise and disturbance from the railway line needs to be considered for residential development. Any residential development should therefore take into account these factors and leave provision for these other things to be done and may therefore be inappropriate at the end. It might be better to put employment there as there is already sufficient river based housing in this part of the Medway Towns, particularly on The Esplanade on the opposite side of the river and as mentioned above. (para 3.3) and below (para 4.4).

#### **4. Miscellaneous Matters**

- 4.1 The concept of a riverside walk is always attractive but of course it must not preclude the overriding need to make provision for the road on the east side of the railway to enable the transport situation to be resolved.
- 4.2 An improved setting for Temple Manor is long overdue. This important, historic building is one that should be more exposed to accessibility to the public and be more open rather than cluttered around with other industrial buildings.
- 4.3 Improved pedestrian links to the station are a very sensible objective although the only link to the High Street/town centre that is viable would appear to be along Station Road, which is already there, in that there is a footpath from the tunnel at the far end of the station. Perhaps the access under the railway line could be brought nearer to the Strood Centre.
- 4.4 As mentioned above, the site marked (8) on the Plan should be an employment site or one supplemental to retail and allow for Strood town itself to develop. To allocate the area for houses at this crucial point would not be foresighted. There is already enough residential property at the riverside with site number (7) (restricted to the area at present accessible from Canal Road), the vast proposed development at Rochester Riverside, and whatever else can be picked up, if it is thought appropriate and certainly much in the future, at Temple Marshes (6). Thus this site (8) should be where Strood centre should be allowed to expand to or providing further employment provision to match that that should be provided at (5), apart from allowing a public space to be available.

#### **5. Traffic Problems**

- 5.1 The major thing missing from this Plan is the treatment of roads in Strood. This has been the problem for Strood forever and even since the creation of Commercial Road in the sixties. Originally the High Street was the main road and shopping street (and also was the A2 classified road).
- 5.2 Some shops were taken down in the High Street by the railway bridge to enable the main road to cut through into Commercial Road. The shops taken down were those up to Fernbank Bros, which was left standing. At the time the High Street was the shopping area, so the proposal bypassed that.

- 5.3 B & Q and the retail park there were originally Pelican Creek (a boatyard which was sold off in 1970 and never reopened as such); the Guards' factory providing massive employment for clothing manufacture; Rocola Shirts; Crombie Overcoats, etc; and behind it eventually Fisher Controls (now Morrisons). In fact the Civic Centre was at this time the Wingets' factory and thus was heavy industry replacing the original manufacturer of traction engines and steam rollers, Aveling and Porter. They were high employment ratio activities. At the end of Knight Road had been since the 1930's Kent Alloys Limited or its successors, primarily manufacturing for the aircraft industry and subsequently the motor industry in the shape of motorcar wheels.
- 5.4 Plans for a ring road in Strood had started circulating in the 1970's involving the straightening up of the end of Commercial Road by taking a straight line through the Temple Street car park from the corner at McDonalds and through the properties fronting Cuxton Road on the north eastern side and straight up through the London Road railway bridge, where the dual carriageway was going to be extended, to link in with the that referred to earlier in these comments. (para 1.4) and in the next paragraph.
- 5.5 The other side of the ring lay inside the Victoria to Rochester railway line for which some properties have already been acquired - such as the grocer's shop on the east side of North Street which is now the site of an advertisement hoarding. Even though Aldi is proposing to build on the former Friary car park, there is no reason why a ring road should not be able to be constructed inside the railway line provided that development recognises that the delivery access for Aldi should be incorporated into that road, thus utilising it for two purposes at that point. The route entailed linking up with the dual carriageway just beyond the Canal Road/High Street railway bridges, which is why from that area was formed a dual carriageway many years ago. It is strange that the two dual carriageways at either end of the proposed alternative road systems have been constructed but the final links have never been created.
- 5.6 So far as the northern area of Strood is concerned, the ring road system mentioned in the previous paragraphs is probably the best available. There is an immediate need however not only to consider that, but also the southern half of the ring which should adopt the Commercial Road option from McDonalds' traffic lights but approach them from Knight Road instead of using the existing Commercial Road. The traffic lights may have to be replaced with a roundabout or simply left there with a different system of operation to give precedence to the Knight Road/Commercial Road operation. In order to get to those traffic lights, one would have to use, and it would be sensible to use, a road effectively following the route to the present Civic Centre car park along Janes Creek and under the bridge carrying the Medway Valley line and coming out to a mini roundabout at the exit from the retail park to Knight Road.
- 5.7 Although the road would have to be lowered to get high vehicles through under the Medway Valley railway bridge, that is not an engineering proposition which should be difficult to achieve, even though Janes Creek carries water. Surely engineering in the modern day is sufficiently equipped to devise a system of culverting or other means to prevent the water from causing a problem and allow

vehicles to pass under the bridge of a height which could be able to pass under Darnley arches and the London Road railway bridge. It need not be higher because those are the ways the vehicles have to travel at the moment or in any event.

- 5.8 All of this would then link up with the start of the road that would eventually go down the east side of the Medway Valley line to link up with Saxon Way near the cinema complex and service any employment provision at site (8), site (6) and possibly provide a link through which would enable the Knight Road Business Park and the business parks thereabouts to be serviced. Something could be done to get under the railway better than the present entrance to the Morgans timber yard. It alternatively, the provision that is now put forward for a road along the line of Janes Creek could continue to be in existence with most people turning left when reaching Knight Road and getting to the rest of Knight Road that way.
- 5.9 The advantage of this temporary proposal at the same time leading to a more permanent solution would be that there would be a clear definition between the retail centre of Strood providing convenience and other local shopping and Morrisons including anything that were to go on sites (1) and (12). Morrisons has proved to be a thorny question and one that needs addressing in terms of the fact that it has created a draw against the traditional High Street shops and that is not good for Strood. Morrisons will continue to be a draw for supermarket shopping anyway and most of its customers come by car. They do not therefore need to link with the High Street apart from the pedestrian link that is already provided through Knight Road itself and the pedestrian crossing near to the Retail Park.
- 5.10 Essentially, what this would then achieve is a clear definition and encompassing of the High Street and the Retail Park as one centre, which is what is required. Not only is that a tidy and neat solution but it is one that is promoting Strood centre in a way which will help its regeneration, which is the priority stated. What it seeks to achieve is to take the roads out of the shopping area and promote the regeneration of the Strood centre through provision of better general accessibility, retention of car parking within that centre (accessed off Commercial Road) and tie together the two slightly disparate areas of the High Street and Retail Park. It would follow the line that has been set by the MGL development at Tolgate Lane (site (9)) which provides a shopping link between the retail park and the High Street on what is now a pedestrian thoroughfare through Tolgate Lane. This makes a sustainable future for Strood in a way that no other provision has and then enhancing Strood with the through traffic taken out.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The important consideration that must always be borne in mind for the regeneration of Strood is the rationalisation and improvement of the road system to take the through traffic out. The system that is proposed in these comments is almost all available without much acquisition of property and what is to be acquired could be relatively inexpensive. The engineering and road solutions are ones that were going to have to be made anyway but existing roads are adopted where possible and where sensible.

- 6.2 Retail should be encouraged but inclusion should be made for possible further retail or retail/employment outlets (but not necessarily shops) at site (8).
- 6.3 Tourism would gain from a reconsideration of site (6) for parking and the provision of an up and down the river ferry service which would give an innovative tourist entrance to the many sites in the Medway that are eminently worth visiting and link in with the improvement of the setting for Temple Manor (4). There could be further residential allocation but it should be limited and it has to take into account the closeness of the railway line, in each instance. Further tourism improvements would be a public place at (8) and the retention of the Aveling Porter building as part of that and a riverside walk (3).
- 6.4 So far as residential is concerned, apart from the existing provision and the extension of site (7), there really is no need for any further housing, particularly at (5). Although riverside frontage is preferred for housing, there is plenty already provided at what has been done at site (7) and what is intended at (11), together with the existing provision along The Esplanade.
- 6.5 Employment sites should be at (5), (6) and (8) close to the railway line and by a continuation of the existing employment areas without causing difficulty to those local employers. Added to the mix should be the Strood Dock Terminal area, which more readily equates with the Medway City Estate/Commissioners Road Estate area than any other.
- 6.6 Site (1) would be better for semi Retail Park uses although that could be mixed with other employment uses available to the public direct. The Tesco realignment and reconsideration is appropriate but subject to not affecting the road proposals, which must be paramount.

## **APPENDIX 5**

**PUBLICATION DRAFT FOR THE MEDWAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**  
**REPRESENTATIONS OF MICHAEL DAKERS LMRTPI**

**CENTRAL CHATHAM INSET PLAN ADAPTED FROM 1992 PLAN**

# Key to Central Chatham Inset Plan – 1992



- Chatham Ring Road as was



- Potential Central Square



- Great Lines



- High Street/Railway Street/Military Road  
Pedestrianised Area/Streets



- Globe Lane



- Stores

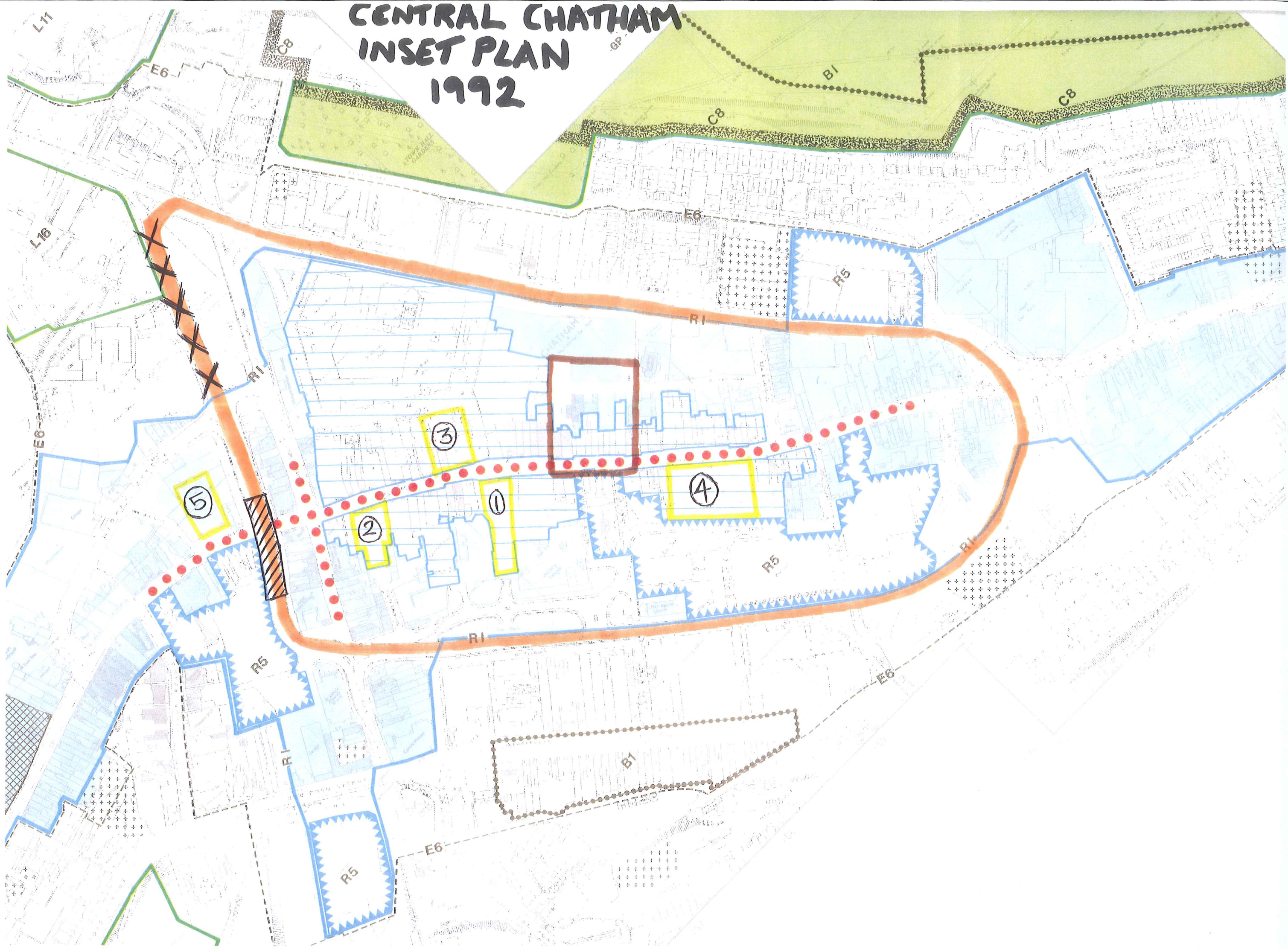
- 1 – Former Woolworths
- 2 – Former Marks & Spencer
- 3 – Former Cooperate Store
- 4 – Alders
- 5 – Argos



- Sir John Hawkins Flyover



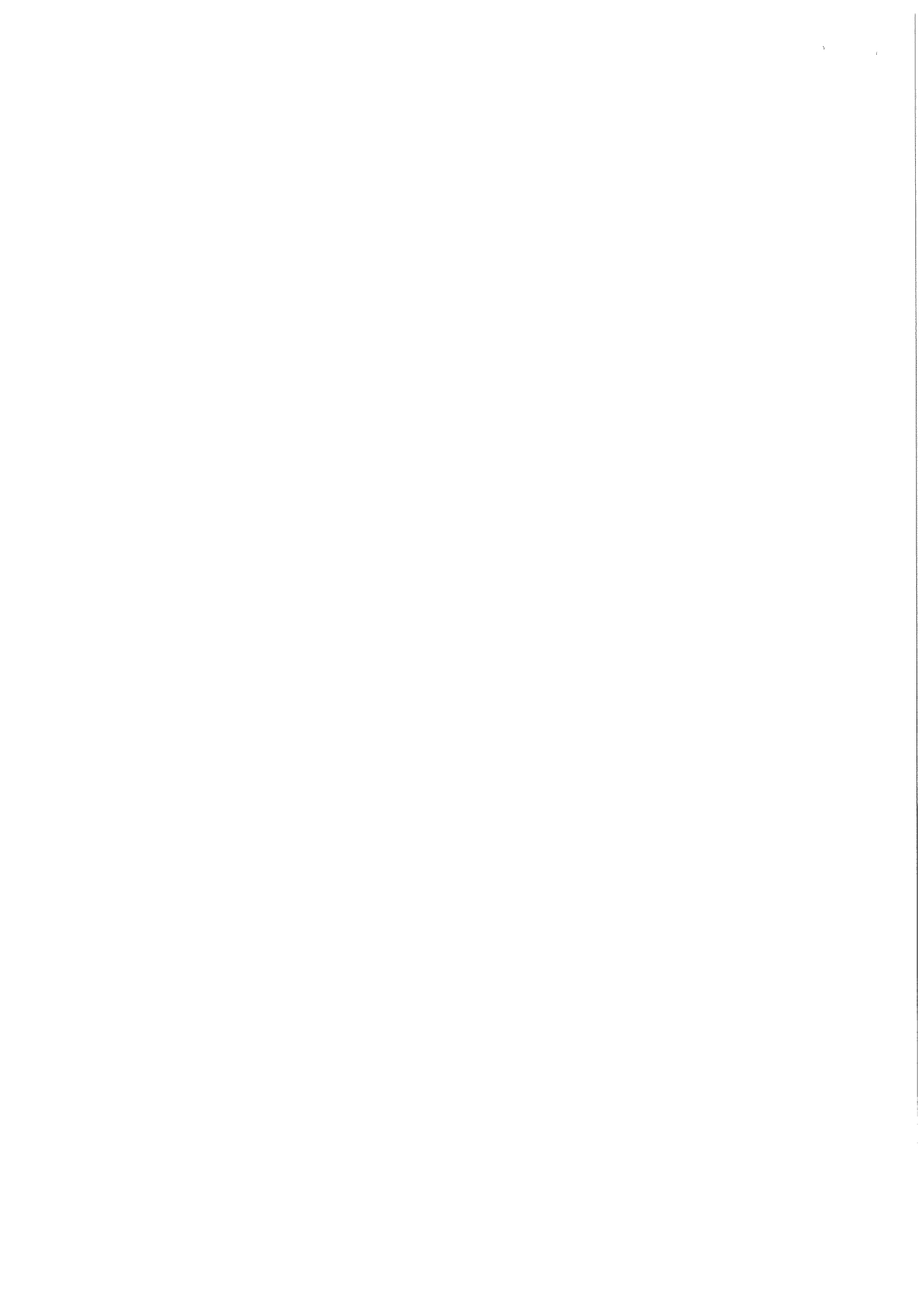
# CENTRAL CHATHAM INSET PLAN 1992



## **APPENDIX 6**

### **PUBLICATION DRAFT FOR THE MEDWAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK** **REPRESENTATIONS OF MICHAEL DAKERS LMRTPI**

#### **1992 PLAN POLICIES IN RESPECT OF TOURISM**



## 9. LEISURE AND TOURISM

### ISSUES

#### Introduction

- 9.01 Leisure activities are assuming an increasingly important role in modern life. This is due to an increasing demand for leisure facilities, which has arisen because of the trends in increasing leisure time, increasing income levels and greater personal mobility. The same factors have contributed to the growing tourism industry. Leisure activities provide a number of social benefits including relaxation, exercise, social contact, entertainment and competition. These activities range from the very active, for example sport and games, to the passive including cultural activities and spectatorship. The provision of leisure facilities can also have economic benefits. A direct economic impact is the creation of jobs and injection of investment through increased consumer spending. Indirect economic benefits of increased leisure provision include the enhancement of an area's image thus increasing the potential for investment from outside and the ability of the area both to attract visitors and to hold them over a longer period of time. Attractive tourist activities will also, of course be enjoyed and appreciated by the resident population.

#### Indoor Sports Facilities

- 9.02 In the Local Plan Area there are two district sports centres and four local centres. The two district sports centres are the Black Lion Sports Centre in Gillingham and the Strood Sports Centre which both provide a wide range of facilities. In the Local Plan Area there is also approximately 2500m<sup>2</sup> of local sports centres as well as the Ice Bowl at Gillingham. Indoor swimming pool provision in the Medway Towns is provided at Hoo St. Werburgh and at the Black Lion and Strood Sports Centres. At the present time the total provision of indoor pool facilities is approximately 1368m<sup>2</sup>. A further 400m<sup>2</sup> is being provided at Rainham where a new leisure pool will open in 1990.
- 9.03 In accordance with Sports Council standards the optimum level of indoor sports facilities for a population the size of the Medway Towns would be four district sports centres plus 5635m<sup>2</sup> of local sports centres. Over the Plan period these requirements could increase to between 4-5 sports centres plus 6049m<sup>2</sup> of local centres. The Sports Council suggest that for a population the size of the Medway Towns, the minimum level of swimming pool provision should be 1225m<sup>2</sup>. This requirement could increase to 1315m<sup>2</sup> during the Plan period. Therefore, according to the minimum levels set by the Sports Council, the requirement for the Medway Towns by the end of the Plan period will be an additional 2 or 3 district sport centres providing indoor facilities, plus an additional 3,500m<sup>2</sup> of local sports centre floorspace. The provision of swimming pools is likely to be adequate. It must be stressed that this is a numerical assessment and does not take into account locational requirements and other factors.

#### Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 9.04 The provision of outdoor sports facilities in the Medway Towns totals 530 acres. New centralised playing field facilities, including football, rugby, cricket and hockey pitches, are being provided by the Local Authorities at Temple Marsh in Strood and Castlemaine Avenue in Gillingham. As a result of these developments the overall provision of outdoor sports facilities will improve dramatically but some areas will still be poorly served, most notably Hempstead, Walderslade, Princes Park and Frindsbury.
- 9.05 In accordance with National Playing Fields Association (N.P.F.A.) standards, the minimum level of provision of outdoor sports facilities in the Medway Towns should be 980 acres at current population levels. Over the Plan period this level could increase to 1050 acres. It should be noted that the N.P.F.A. standard excludes

school and other educational facilities, full size golf courses, commons and parks. According to these standards, the Medway Towns will require the provision of an additional 500 acres of outdoor sports facilities in the Local Plan period.

- 9.06 At present there are two 18 hole golf courses in the Local Plan Area at Gillingham and Deangate, in addition to a range of smaller golfing facilities within the area. However, the possible loss of Gillingham Golf Course due to the construction of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road could lead to a serious deficiency in the provision of golf course facilities in the Local Plan Area. The Sports Council suggest an optimum standard for golf course provision for the Medway Towns would be fourteen 9 hole courses at current population levels.

#### **Informal Recreation**

- 9.07 The Medway Towns are surrounded by attractive open countryside and have a generous network of open spaces which penetrate through the urban area forming an attractive visual feature and an important recreation resource. It is estimated that there are approximately 980 acres of informal public open space within the area including country parks and play spaces. There is an extensive network of public rights of way in the Local Plan Area which provide access to the countryside and links between open spaces in housing areas. In the rural area particularly, these have an increasingly valuable recreational role.

#### **Water-Based Recreation**

- 9.08 The River Medway provides an attractive setting for water based recreation and tourist activities owing to its varied landscape and tidal characteristics. It has been under used in the past largely due to its industrial connections and problems of access. Today, industrial uses are less prevalent and the opportunity is there to promote the river's recreation and tourist potential to a greater extent. However, realisation of this potential will need to be sympathetic to the environment and important areas for nature conservation.

#### **Arts and Entertainments**

- 9.09 The principal entertainment venue in the Medway Towns is Chatham Central Hall. Other entertainment facilities include the Medway Arts Centre, ABC Cinema in Chatham, the Ritz Bingo in Chatham, a few night clubs, a large number of restaurants, particularly in Rochester, and an even larger number of public houses scattered throughout the area. For an area the size of the Medway Towns there are only a limited number of major entertainment venues. One of the major factors said to influence arts provision is the proximity of London as an entertainment centre. However, with the rising cost of trips to the capital, in particular escalating ticket prices, it is unrealistic to assume that London can meet the future entertainment needs of the Medway Towns population.

#### **Tourism**

- 9.10 The Medway Towns have been successful in promoting a variety of tourist attractions during recent years and are now firmly established on the Kent Tourist route. Rochester City Centre is presently the main focus of tourist activity in the area containing many fine Listed Buildings and a number of tourist attractions such as the Castle, the Cathedral, Dickens Centre, and the Guildhall Museum. Chatham Historic Dockyard is also a major tourist area, containing the greatest concentration of scheduled Ancient Monuments in the United Kingdom. Its re-use provides a special tourism opportunity and it is being managed as a "Living Museum" and includes the Ropery and the Sail and Colour Loft. Other attractions in the area include the Royal Engineers Museum at Brompton, Fort Amherst, the Medway Heritage Centre and Upper Upnor Castle.

## **Tourist Accommodation**

- 9.11 Tourist accommodation in the Medway Towns consists of a mixture of hotels, guest houses, inns and bed and breakfast establishments providing approximately 700 bedspaces. There is also a privately owned touring caravan and camping park with 60 pitches, as well as the holiday park at Allhallows. Business tourists account for a high proportion of tourist nights in the Medway Towns. Many hotels have indicated that between 75%-90% of their bookings are attributable to business visitors. These are, however, normally only occupied during the week leaving vacancies at weekends. If the area is to satisfy the needs of future tourist growth then additional tourist accommodation should be encouraged within the area.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **Kent Structure Plan**

- 9.12 The Kent Structure Plan provides the strategic framework for leisure provision in the County. The overall objective is to satisfy demand for leisure by creating new facilities and improving the use of existing facilities. The Plan acknowledges the value of tourism to the County's economy, and its growth potential. It therefore seeks to maximise the local income and employment generated by tourism in appropriate areas by encouraging a wider range of tourist accommodation and activities subject to environmental safeguards. Structure Plan policies relating to tourism and recreation are listed in Appendix 1. The main thrust of the Structure Plan policies includes:-

- (a) encouraging the provision of serviced accommodation, especially in urban areas
- (b) encouraging new touring caravan and camping sites inland, close to primary distributor routes, urban areas, main countryside and heritage attractions.
- (c) encouraging proposals for new tourist attractions and facilities which will help provide local income and employment, diversify attractions and attract staying visitors.
- (d) safeguarding the existing and provision of further recreational open space.
- (e) encouraging the provision of leisure facilities particularly in urban areas.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- 9.13 The following objectives have been identified in relation to leisure and tourism in the Medway Towns:
- (a) To ensure an adequate range of leisure and tourist facilities in the Medway Towns, to meet the needs and aspirations of local residents and visitors to the area.
  - (b) To remedy serious shortfalls which exist in the current level of leisure and tourist provision.
  - (c) To promote the Medway Towns as one of the major tourist centres in the South East.

## POLICIES AND REASONED JUSTIFICATION

### Existing Leisure and Tourism Facilities

9.14 Most sports facilities in the Local Plan Area are generally well used during peak periods but it is clear that the majority have spare capacity at other times. Measures should be introduced to promote greater usage of facilities, such as more positive marketing and offering concessionary rates to certain groups in the community. Greater usage can also be encouraged by improving existing facilities. This may include providing changing facilities at sports grounds, upgrading the public footpath/bridleway network and providing more visitor interpretation centres, picnic facilities, toilets and adequate coach and car parking at major tourist attractions. There are also considerable recreation facilities in schools, further education colleges and army establishments. The dual use of such facilities could encourage greater public use and ease the problem of under provision in certain areas. The Education Reform Act may present opportunities for increased dual use within schools. Such schemes need to be provided on an organised basis and subject to suitable timing and management arrangements to avoid problems of security and vandalism. These are all management considerations, and cannot be covered by specific policies within the Local Plan. However it is the intention of the Local Plan Authorities that existing leisure and tourism facilities will be actively promoted and improved to encourage greater usage where there is no conflict with policies within the Plan.

9.15 Within the Local Plan Area there are strong pressures to develop leisure sites for alternative uses. Policy L1 provides protection for such sites whether they are in public, private or educational ownership. However it does recognise that exceptional circumstances may exist where it would be beneficial to develop existing leisure sites. In such cases replacement facilities will need to be provided.

**Policy L1** There will be a presumption against existing Leisure or Tourism sites and facilities being used for alternative forms of non-leisure development, unless they can be satisfactorily relocated elsewhere within the Plan Area or the site is allocated for other forms of development in the Local Plan.

9.16 Existing recreational land, open spaces and amenity land make a valuable contribution to the informal recreational needs of the resident population within the Medway Towns. They also provide important "green lungs" which break up the built-up area. The following policy protects these open spaces from development whether the land is in public, educational or private use.

**Policy L2** There will be a strong presumption against the development of existing recreational open spaces, informal open space and amenity land unless the site is otherwise allocated in the Local Plan.

9.17 The development of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road could result in the possible loss of Gillingham Golf Course. It is important that this does not lead to a serious deficiency in the provision of golf course facilities in the Local Plan Area or to the loss of the open qualities of the site. The following Policy is therefore proposed to protect the open character of this site.

**Policy L3** When the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road is built and in the event of Gillingham Golf Course no longer being viable for golfing purposes, the remainder of the site will only be used for Public Open Space and leisure uses appropriate to the character and location of the site.

## **New Leisure and Tourism Development**

- 9.18 The private sector has become increasingly active in providing leisure facilities in the Medway Towns. The Local Planning Authorities will seek to encourage initiatives by the private sector and will support proposals for facilities which are currently not available or are under provided in the area, providing that there are no detrimental effects on the environment. In particular opportunities may arise from the completion of Medway Towns Northern Relief Road. Where appropriate the Local Authorities will take the opportunity to promote joint initiatives with the private sector.

**Policy L4 Initiatives for the provision of Leisure and Tourism facilities shall generally be considered favourably by the Local Planning Authorities.**

- 9.19 When considering proposals for new residential development, the Local Planning Authorities will need to ensure that adequate leisure facilities are provided to meet the aspirations and needs of the local population. Open space standards as put forward by the National Playing Fields Association shall be applied to new developments. Proposed playing fields should be provided on a centralised basis and developers will be required to make the appropriate contribution to the provision of these facilities. In the case of play areas, these shall be provided and equipped by the developers.

- 9.20 A minimum target of 6 acres (2.43 hectares) per 1,000 population is recommended by the NPFA to meet the outdoor playing space requirements of both sexes and all age groups. This standard includes public and private facilities including pitches, courts, greens, areas for casual play, athletic facilities and pitch and putt golf courses but specifically excludes school and other educational facilities, full size golf courses, commons and parks. The overall standards are applied as follows:-

- i) 1.62 - 1.82 hectares (4 - 4.5 acres) per 1,000 population for organised games and sports.
- ii) 0.6 hectares (1.5 acres) per 1,000 population for casual play space, 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) of which should have play equipment.

**Policy L5 The Local Planning Authorities shall seek to ensure that an adequate provision of open space (as defined by the National Playing Fields Association) is provided within major new residential developments.**

- 9.21 The proposed new residential developments in rural areas will impose increasing demands on the public open space of these areas, however, they do provide the opportunity for the provision of informal recreation areas where formerly these have been lacking or were under provided. At High Halstow, public open space should be provided in accordance with the N.P.F.A. minimum overall standard (6 acres per 1,000 population) for the projected population increase of approximately 500 people. At Halling Riverside, the new playing fields have already been agreed with applicants. At Lower Upnor Quarry, the provision of a picnic area and nature reserve will be the subject of discussions with the Nature Conservancy Council.

**Policy L6 Any proposals for new residential development in accordance with Policy V1 will be subject to the provision of the following recreation facilities:-**

- i) Halling Riverside - riverside walk, new playing fields;
- ii) High Halstow - public open space (at least 3 acres) with play equipment;



- iii) Lower Upnor Quarry - open space picnic area to rear of quarry with parking (10 spaces) and development of nature reserve facilities.

9.22 The Local Planning Authorities consider that some additional provision of playing fields for formal and informal recreation is required in the urban areas being desirable both in terms of meeting NPFA guidelines for playing field provision and in some cases where it provides the most suitable use for the site. Sites (iii) and (iv) below, are included in the event of them not being required for education purposes set out in Policy U8.

**Policy L7 The Local Planning Authorities will seek to provide playing fields at the following locations:**

- i) Star Farm Paddock
- ii) Castlemaine Avenue
- iii) Hempstead Valley
- iv) West of Featherby Road

9.23 Although existing indoor sports facilities in the area are well located and well used there are some gaps in the spread of facilities. It is, therefore, important to ensure that there are suitable sites for the provision of new indoor facilities. The following site has been identified as a replacement for the existing Casino Sports Centre in Chatham which is due to close owing to proposed redevelopment for residential purposes. Being close to main traffic and bus routes, the site is readily accessible and has ample space to accommodate ancillary playing fields.

**Policy L8 Land to the north of GEC Avionics is allocated on the Proposals Map for the development of an indoor sports facility. Proposals for development which prejudice this scheme will be resisted.**

#### **Informal Leisure Provision**

9.24 There is considerable potential to expand informal leisure provision in the Medway Towns taking into account the large open spaces available within the urban framework and the attractive open countryside close by. In order to promote rural recreation activities, accessibility to the countryside needs to be improved. The following policies seek to expand informal leisure provision and also help to create a more attractive environment.

9.25 In order to improve management of the area and the facilities available, the following sites are proposed for designation as Country Parks. Close to large centres of population, these areas are already popular with local residents. Country Park status should also help to promote the site and attract visitors from outside the local area as well as being important areas for nature conservation.

**Policy L9 The Local Planning Authorities will seek to provide Country Parks at the following locations:**

- i) Halling and Cuxton Riverside
- ii) Cockham Wood Riverside Between Upnor and Hoo
- iii) Capstone
- iv) Gillingham Riverside

9.26 The sites listed in Policy L10 are known to have nature conservation value and in particular, Lower Upnor Quarry and Cliffe Chalk Pit are designated S.S.S.I.'s. However, the sites are close to existing residential areas and would be of great interest to local residents and school parties. Accordingly, it is important, where appropriate, that suitable visitor management schemes are implemented in

order to protect the areas. Policy C9 provides for protection against development at or near Nature Reserves and lists those sites to be designated by the Local Planning Authorities.

**Policy L10** The Local Planning Authorities will, where appropriate and with full regard to Policy C9, adopt suitable visitor management schemes at the following locations:

- i) Lower Upnor Quarry
- ii) Cliffe Chalk Pit
- iii) Lower Twydall Chalk Pit
- iv) Berengrave Pit and Rainham Reserve
- v) Darland Banks/Ambley Woods/East Hoath Wood
- vi) Rose Court Farm
- vii) Baty's Marsh

9.27

The provision of informal open space within the urban area is important both in terms of providing important visual relief in densely built up areas and in terms of providing informal recreation for local people and visitors alike.

**Policy L11** The Local Planning Authorities will promote the provision of informal public open spaces with designs and use appropriate to the location and existing character of the following sites:

- i) Great Lines
- ii) Lower Lines (in the event of cessation of Ministry of Defence use)
- iii) Inner Lines
- iv) East Hoath Wood
- v) Chatham Maritime
- vi) Land South of Pier Road
- vii) Taddington Wood
- viii) Tunbury Wood
- ix) Disused Dockyard Railway, South of Pier Road (in the event of cessation of commercial use)
- x) Land to the west of the Wainscott Eastern Bypass

### **Public Rights of Way**

9.28

In the Local Plan Area, public rights of way link residential and business areas, parks and open spaces. There are also several longer distance paths within easy access of the Medway Towns, which are a valuable recreation resource, such as the North Downs Way, the Pilgrims Way and the Saxon Shore Way. However, they are one of the most important means by which the general public can enjoy the countryside. In the villages and open countryside footpaths are a valued amenity of importance to both residents and visitors. In their role as agents for the Highway Authority, the Local Planning Authorities will continue to use its best endeavours to keep this network open for public use and the following policy supports this aim.

**Policy L12** The Local Planning Authorities will support the retention and, where possible, the extension and improvement of the existing network of public footpaths and bridleways where this is compatible with other interests.

### **River-based Recreation**

9.29

The River Medway is becoming increasingly popular for sailing activities but it is under-utilised as a potential focal point for leisure activities. The sites listed in Policy L13 are therefore proposed for marina developments with the aim

of promoting the river for tourist use and improving access.

**Policy L13 The Local Planning Authorities will generally consider favourably proposals for marina developments at the following sites:**

- i) Chatham Dockyard
- ii) Temple Marsh
- iii) Chatham Riverside

9.30 The River Medway is important not only for active sports such as sailing and windsurfing but also for more informal activities such as walking, fishing and bird-watching. However, within the urban area there are few access points down to the river. There are some attractive areas where the public can sit and view the river, and a riverside walk also exists along certain stretches but, ideally, connections are needed to form a more continuous riverside walk. A similar objective is being pursued upstream of Halling by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council as part of a long distance riverside walk. The following policy seeks to complete the walk and consequently improve access to the river for the public, with the intention of attracting tourists, as well as local users. In certain locations it may be desirable for the walk to relate to the surrounding area, such as courtyards, jetties and connecting pathways. The Nature Conservancy Council will be consulted in areas of sensitive nature conservation.

**Policy L14 The Local Planning Authorities will seek to provide a riverside walk between the following locations:**

- i) On the southern side of the River Medway, incorporating Gillingham Riverside Country Park and linking the Dockyard to Rochester Esplanade and Borstal Marshes
- ii) On the northern side of the River Medway linking Hoo, Upnor and Temple Marsh to Halling

**Development proposals affecting these areas shall normally be refused unless they indicate the line of the riverside walk and appropriate landscaping details. Such details shall relate the walk to the proposed development and the river frontage.**

### **Entertainment Facilities**

9.31 The overall population of the Medway Towns is certainly large enough to support a wide range of facilities taking into consideration the growing interest in the arts, rising incomes and future population growth. In order to boost the image of the Medway Towns as a major entertainments centre, the development of entertainment facilities will be encouraged in order to make the area more attractive to tourists and improve the quality of life for local residents.

9.32 Land to the west of the Wainscott Eastern Bypass has been identified for a multi-screen cinema and entertainments complex. The site is located on the edge of the built up area and lies alongside the route of the proposed Medway Towns Northern Relief Road. The development of a cinema and entertainments complex on this site would generate large volumes of both public and private transport traffic. To minimise the impact of such traffic upon the local highway network, the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road would have to be in place in advance of the implementation of any leisure proposal on this land. The Local Planning Authorities also acknowledge that there are localised shortages in the provision of formal and informal open space within the Wainscott area. To this extent, any development of the land to the west of the Wainscott Eastern Bypass will have to make appropriate open space provision as an integral part of any leisure scheme.

Given the important strategic location of the site and its high visibility from the A228 and the Wainscott Eastern Bypass, the Local Planning Authorities will further expect a high standard of landscaping on the site.

- 9.33 In addition to the site to the west of the Wainscott Eastern Bypass, there are further opportunities for formal leisure provision and entertainments facilities particularly within the town centres.

**Policy L15** The provision of new entertainments facilities will generally be considered favourably. A specific site is allocated at land to the west of the Wainscott Eastern Bypass for a major entertainments complex. Any proposal for this site will be subject to high standards of building design and landscaping and will include appropriate provision for both formal and informal open space. The development of this site will be further subject to the completion of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road

9.34 **Tourism and Accommodation**

The Medway Towns have great potential as a tourist centre and have been successful in promoting a variety of tourist attractions. The aim for the future is to consolidate this position by attracting more visitors, promoting less well known attractions and encouraging people to extend their stay. This is particularly important since tourism as an industry in the Medway Towns will have considerable potential to gain benefits following the construction of the Channel Tunnel. In order to promote the image of the Medway Towns as a business and tourist centre, the following proposals fulfil the need for further hotel accommodation in the Local Plan Area.

- 9.35 The former Doust Shipyard site is allocated for mixed development including principally residential, hotel and leisure uses. Any development for commercial and retail purposes will not be allowed to dominate any scheme of redevelopment on this site, as adequate provision has been made for such uses elsewhere within the Local Plan Area.

**Policy L16** Proposals for Hotel Development will be considered favourably at the following locations:-

- i) Chatham Riverside
- ii) former Doust Shipyard site, Chatham Riverside
- iii) Temple Marsh
- iv) Hempstead
- v) Chatham Maritime.

- 9.36 In order that the Local Plan Area satisfies the needs of future tourist growth other types of tourist accommodation should be encouraged within the area. Policy H15 deals with the conversion of residential units for use as bed and breakfast or guest house accommodation. Tourist trends indicate a rise in the popularity of self-catering holidays, however opportunities for self-catering accommodation in the Local Plan Area are limited.

**Policy L17** Proposals for small scale tourist accommodation, and for touring caravan and camping sites, will normally be considered favourably in appropriate locations.